

UNION (AFP) — The Arab League on Tuesday welcomed a call by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) president for an end to crippling U.N. sanctions against Iraq to alleviate the suffering of its people. The appeal by UAE President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan "expresses a sincere Arab desire to restore the Iraqi people as a cornerstone to strengthening Arab work," Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid said. "Arab countries, including the sister nation Kuwait, have repeatedly expressed their sympathy with the Iraqi people and their pain at the suffering which 18 million Iraqis endure," Dr. Abdul Meguid said in a statement received by AFP. But the league secretary general called on Iraq to "respond to a humanitarian request to end the suffering of the families of Kuwaiti prisoners and those lost" during its August 1990-February 1991 occupation of the emirate.

Arab League backs UAE sanctions

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Ciller to form new government

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's President Suleyman Demirel on Tuesday asked Prime Minister Tansu Ciller to form a new government. Ms. Ciller's press secretary Mehmet Bican told reporters. Ms. Ciller, who lost a weekend vote of confidence in her minority administration, is likely to form a coalition with her former social democrat partners as a stop-gap government until early general elections are held.

Arafat in Brazil

BRASILIA (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat arrived in Brazil early on Tuesday as part of his first visit to South America. The Palestinian leader landed at an air base aboard a private plane. He was greeted by acting Foreign Minister Sebastiao do Rego Barros and Arab ambassadors. Mr. Arafat was on a one-day visit to Brazil's capital and was to hold talks with President Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

Turkish journalists held by Serbs

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Two Turkish journalists held by Bosnian Serbs are well but their release is being conditioned on an exchange with two Serb journalists allegedly held by the government authorities, U.N. officials said Tuesday. The two, Munir Acim, a reporter with the mass-circulation Harriyet and Ali Kokac from the Anatolia news agency, were detained by the Bosnian Serbs on Friday. First reports said the pair were later released but the United Nations has confirmed their identities and that they are being held in a Serb military prison just outside Sarajevo.

Third French test 'soon' — Greenpeace

PARIS (AFP) — France will carry out the third of its series of underground nuclear tests at Mururoa Atoll "soon," the environmental group Greenpeace said here Tuesday, adding that it would send a protest ship to the site. A Greenpeace yacht was due to leave for the test site from Papeete Tuesday, a Greenpeace official in the South Pacific port said. The 15-metre Caramba has a crew of five. Another vessel, part of a multi-national peace flotilla formed to protest against the series of tests, was also due to leave the port Tuesday. The environmental organisation said France had decided to confine testing between November and February despite difficult climatic conditions. Tests are usually not carried out during this time because of cyclones in the region.

Pakistan expels another 17 Afghans

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan on Tuesday ordered another 17 Afghan nationals, including six diplomats, to leave the country within 48 hours, only a month after 13 Afghan diplomats were expelled. A Foreign Office statement here said the expelled diplomats include Naseem Faqiri, charge d'affaires at the Afghan embassy in Islamabad, Cultural Attache Habib Shah Hamid and Assistant Cultural Attache Farooq Chakri.

Three hanged in public in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Three men including two brothers who organised gangs involving young girls have been hanged in public for rape, Iranian newspapers reported Tuesday. A revolutionary tribunal found brothers Vahid Reza and Abdul Reza Masrur and Hameez Azizi guilty of rape, drug trafficking, and organising "debauched parties with young women and minors." They were judged as "corruptors of the earth" and hanged in the southern town of Shiraz on Monday.

cheers, boos at end of Wagner's new-style Ring

NDON (AP) — A new-style modern staging of Richard Wagner's Ring cycle, which the hero, Siegfried, in skin-tights and a horned helmet, brandishing a brown paper bag, her head ended in a horn, in a 20-minute interval, shouting and cheering, ended the Ring cycle. The cycle, which was directed by Dutch director, which was a new-style modern staging of Richard Wagner's Ring cycle, which the hero, Siegfried, in skin-tights and a horned helmet, brandishing a brown paper bag, her head ended in a horn, in a 20-minute interval, shouting and cheering, ended the Ring cycle.

Sisters make suicide leap from 1. Kong highrise

ING KONG (AFP) — A teenage sister pair died from a public housing block in the latest suicide of young girls in Hong Kong. A police spokesman said Monday that a 16-year-old sister, Wan-Han, 13, and her sister, Wan-Han, 13, jumped from the 19th floor of the block. The girls reportedly had been fighting and were pushed by a neighbour to the edge of the building.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز جوردانية سبوتيك تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية الراية.

AMMAN WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1995, JUMADA ULA 24, 1416

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

King: Tripartite federation could prevent Iraq break-up

HM describes Saddam referendum as 'dangerous farce'

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has suggested that transforming Iraq into a federation of Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish communities could avoid the disintegration of the country, which he warned would be a regional "disaster." "A federated Iraq might be the answer," he said in an interview appearing in the Financial Times on Tuesday. The interview was conducted by the paper's Middle East editor David Gardner and correspondent Julian Ozanne. The King dismissed Sunday's referendum in Iraq, in which 99.96 per cent of the electorate expressed support for President Saddam Hussein, as "a dangerous farce." "Unfortunately in our region we have seen many examples of 99 point something per cent results at the polls," King Hussein said, referring to the official Iraqi outcome of a 99.96 per cent endorsement of Saddam Hussein's presidency. But he warned of a "bloodbath" and "a disaster that would affect the entire region" if Iraqis continued to be "strangled from without" by U.N. sanctions and "oppressed from within" by the Saddam regime.

"I have the conviction that what we need in Iraq most is for us to get credible representatives of the three major components of Iraq's people," he said. "To get them somewhere to sit together and work out a national reconciliation between themselves, and to remove this spectre of a bloodbath all Iraqis are afraid of." The outcome of such an exercise, he said, should be new constitutional arrangements, in which "a federated Iraq might be the answer" to fears of an Iraqi break-up. The King acknowledged that his ideas were meeting resistance in the Middle East. "There is not much evidence of support in the region so far," but "a lot of people are listening," he said. The King rejected suggestions that he broke Arab ranks by signing a peace deal with Israel. Egypt had gone before (in 1979), but most importantly, "our Palestinian brothers" had gone ahead with the 1993 Oslo accord with the Jewish state. "We have our hopes and future to look after," he said. "Jordan will never be a card of anybody's hand to play."



Jordan belongs to the Jordanians.

an example that works" and one that should be a model for the region. King Hussein refused to criticise President Saddam personally but said direct relations between the two leaders had been "non-existent" since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. His efforts to talk to the regime through third parties had been "a dialogue of the deaf." On prospects for Israeli-Syrian peace, he criticised the slow pace of negotiations and said direct talks at the highest political level, demanded by Israel but refused by Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, were the only way to break the deadlock and reach a comprehensive Middle East peace embracing Syria and Lebanon. He implicitly criticised Syria by backing Israel's call for direct peace talks as the only way to achieve peace. "Once we chose to move (towards peace with Israel) the way forward was direct negotiations at the highest levels. You can't have them by remote control. You can't have them through third parties, no matter how influential or full of goodwill they are."



Israeli soldiers chase Palestinian protesters in Ramallah on Tuesday (AFP photo)

Israel partially lifts siege of W. Bank, Gaza Strip

GAZA (Agencies) — Israel let Palestinian workers enter from the West Bank and Gaza Strip for the first time in more than three weeks on Tuesday but Palestinians assailed limits barring younger labourers. In Gaza, Palestinian police said 130 trucks carrying fruits and vegetables — the usual average — were allowed in during the first five hours after the closure was lifted. Six trucks were turned back because the drivers were under age. The army lifted the closures at 4 a.m., letting in Palestinians aged 30 and over from the occupied West Bank and 35 and over from self-ruled Gaza. The closures were imposed ahead of a series of Jewish holidays that ended on Monday. Freij Al Khairy, Gaza head of a civil liaison committee with Israel, said the age limit reduced the number of workers entering Israel from the strip to fewer than 8,000 compared to 17,000 before the closure.

"We understood that security was something mutual between all the people. But Israeli security shouldn't be at the expense of the Palestinian people's suffering," he told Reuters. Palestinian police said they had to hold back dozens of under-age Gazans who tried to get through their checkpoints to the Israeli-patrolled Erez crossing. Palestinian officials said they would be raising the issue at a meeting soon with Israeli officials. The Israeli army sealed off Gaza on Sept. 20 and the West Bank a week later to prevent attacks by militants opposed to a peace deal between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel. It says security concerns prompted the age restrictions along with a requirement that workers be collected at crossing points by their Israel employers.

Palestinians complain that Israeli army closures have exceeded 220 days since the PLO took charge in Gaza 17 months ago and have severely harmed the Palestinian economy. An Israeli military spokesman said only married men aged over 35, with a work permit could cross from Gaza, while the age was set at 30 for those on the occupied West Bank. Cars with Palestinian number plates remained barred from Israel and workers had to cross checkpoints on foot and be picked up by their employers on the other side. The Palestinian National Authority said Israel was also barring police travel between Gaza and the self-rule enclave of Jericho in the West Bank, and prohibiting other Arabs from entering Gaza. Foreign Minister Shimon (Continued on page 7)

Iraq promises political reforms following vote

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — The Iraqi government on Tuesday promised more political reforms, with parliamentary elections due by February and possibly a presidential election with more than one candidate some time in the future. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, speaking after Saddam Hussein won more than 99 per cent in Sunday's referendum on his presidency, tried to preempt any Western criticism of the voting, saying the West sought only hegemony over Iraq. He also welcomed a call from Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan, the president of the United Arab Emirates, for an end to the international sanctions against Iraq. "The referendum is only a first step. Other steps will follow along the path of transition from revolutionary to constitutional legitimacy," Mr. Aziz told a news conference. "There should be a new National Assembly (parliament). Its mandate expires in December and a new assembly must be elected within two months," he said. Mr. Aziz's announcement appeared linked to growing speculation that President Saddam, who has ruled Iraq with absolute power since 1979, was planning political changes to improve his regime's badly tarnished image abroad. Diplomatic sources here said that the regime plans a new law to allow political parties, although it is not clear what their mandate will be. Iraq has been ruled since 1968 by Baath Arab Socialist Party. Amid jubilation over Sunday's unprecedented referendum, Mr. Aziz also lashed out at the United States for dismissing that poll as a sham and the promised democratic reforms as a "mockery."

Mr. Aziz said Washington has never been able to praise Iraq since the 1991 Gulf war, even when it recognised the sovereignty of Kuwait, the emirate it had invaded, and allowed U.N. officials to monitor its weapons programmes. "Washington's only goal is to dominate all the oil reserves in the region," Mr. Aziz said. "Only when we say 'please come and take our reserves' will the United States be able to praise us." He also criticised the United Nations for saying that Iraq had lied about its weapons of mass destruction, which Baghdad must destroy under the terms of the Gulf war ceasefire. In August, President Saddam's son-in-law and former weapons chief, Hussein Kamel, fled Iraq and promised to help President Saddam's opponents overthrow him. He said Iraq was hiding information about its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programmes. That forced Iraq to hand over long-concealed data that proved the assertion. Last week, Rolf Ekous, the chief U.N. weapons inspector, told the Security Council (Continued on page 7)

World powers meet on Bosnia

SARAJEVO (R) — Fighting in Bosnia subsided on Tuesday as big-power envoys met in Moscow to prepare for peace talks later this month and expressed optimism the peace process was still on course. U.S. and Russian negotiators said the meeting was unable to solve the tricky question of how the Russian military could be brought into a NATO-led peace force. However, Russia's Igor Ivanov said he assumed that peace talks with the warring parties would go ahead as planned on Oct. 31 and "provide a solid foundation for the peace process in the Balkans." In Sarajevo, a spokesman for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), Yuri Chizhik, described the situation in the former Yugoslav republic as very quiet apart from the northwest, scene of heavy fighting since a ceasefire went into force last Thursday. "It would say it is a kind of disengagement fighting at a pretty low level," Mr. Chizhik told reporters. He said a high-level meeting between representatives of the warring sides, separatist Serbs and the Muslim-led government army and their Croat allies, was expected to take place in the conflict area later on Tuesday, with U.N. monitors present. Another spokesman, Lieutenant-Colonel Chris Vernon, said: "The ceasefire is holding very well along the vast majority of the confrontation line with an ever-decreasing number of firing incidents." "On the north-west confrontation line sporadic fighting continues but the area is slowly stabilising day by day." He described as encouraging the fact that maps of frontlines submitted by both sides showed widespread agreement. In another sign that the situation in Bosnia was improving, albeit gradually, government and Bosnian (Continued on page 7)

Israel gives army 'free' hand against Hizbollah

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's cabinet on Tuesday gave the army "freedom of action" against the Lebanese Hizbollah group and accused Iran and Syria of aiding Hizbollah guerrillas. However, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin suggested that Israel would not launch a large-scale military strike against Hizbollah, which killed nine Israeli soldiers in two attacks in South Lebanon on Thursday and Sunday. Mr. Rabin noted that with the recent attacks, Hizbollah did not violate a 1993 U.S.-brokered understanding under which Hizbollah agreed to refrain from sending Katyusha rockets into northern Israel if Israel did not hit civilian targets in South Lebanon. "Since July this year, during all these months, there were no Katyushas in the Galilee (in northern Israel)," Mr. Rabin said after a four-hour special cabinet session he had convened to decide on a response to Hizbollah. "The fact is that during this

Building demolished

ISRAELI COMMANDOS on Tuesday dynamited a house suspected of being a guerrilla hideout in South Lebanon, security sources reported. The Israeli raiders moved out of a hilltop fort in the Israeli-occupied border enclave under cover of darkness to blow up the abandoned building on the outskirts of the village of Nabatiyeh Al Fawqa 300 metres away. The village is just south of the market town of Nabatiyeh. period, the understandings were observed by both sides. Mr. Rabin suggested that Israel would only change its current policy in Lebanon if Hizbollah decided to rocket northern Israel. However, Mr. Rabin lashed at Syria, charging it with encouraging attacks on

Blast hits Paris subway, injures 28 in new attack

PARIS (Agencies) — A bomb exploded under a seat on a regional subway train near the Orsay Museum during morning rush hour Tuesday, injuring at least 28 people in the latest of a wave of attacks since July, authorities said. Commuters described a darkened tunnel filled with smoke and cries for help from injured passengers sprawled on the tracks after the bomb ripped out the wall of the silver train car. A doctor said the blast severed feet off some victims. The explosion, from a gas canister loaded with hex nuts, was among at least eight bombings or attempted bombings since July. That type of bomb was considered a trademark of Algerian militants opposed to France's support of the military-installed government in Algeria. The militants have claimed some of the previous bombings. Red-and-white police tape ringed the entrance to the Musée d'Orsay station outside the art museum entrance. Fire, police and rescue vehicles filled the street under a gray sky. Helicopters lifted the most seriously hurt while firefighters in black coats and silver helmets carried other bloodied and bandaged victims to ambulances. President Jacques Chirac, cutting short a trip to central (Continued on page 7)

France, expressed his "indignation" at the latest attack and he said he was determined "to do everything to prevent and repress this fanatic violence." Mr. Chirac rushed back to the French capital, where he visited some of the injured at the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital. Premier Alain Juppe told a hushed National Assembly that France "will not let itself be intimidated" and "will not capitulate in the face of barbarism." The explosion occurred at about 7:05 a.m. (0605 GMT) on the Rer line in a tunnel between the St-Michel and the Musée d'Orsay stations (Continued on page 7)

Expellee children sick, deaths reported — U.N.

GENEVA (Agencies) — Several children stranded among 1,000 Palestinians in a no-man's land between Libya and Egypt are sick and two people have been reported dead, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said here Tuesday. Conditions in the tent camp, which has been hit by torrential rains and sand storms, are deteriorating rapidly as hygiene is poor, said UNHCR spokesman Ron Redmond. "Several children are already ill and there are unconfirmed reports of two deaths, one child and one adult," said Mr. Redmond, adding that the "UNHCR is trying to find out whether or not this is true."

UNHCR delegates were expected in the no-man's land Tuesday to look into the legal situation of the trapped Palestinians. "UNHCR is sending today a special protection team to Saloum on the Egyptian-Libyan border as part of an effort to try to solve some of the problems faced by as many as 1,000 Palestinians trapped in the no-man's land," said Mr. Redmond. On Monday the UNHCR distributed 3,600 litres of water and food to the Palestinians. "We want to see this worsening situation resolved in a short time," Mr. Redmond added. Water in the camp is salty and improper for extended use and most sick people have diarrhoea, the spokesman said. Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi decided at the start of September to expel 30,000 Palestinians living in Libya to show the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy accords had failed to produce a Palestinian homeland. A spokesman for the deportees said earlier Tuesday that Libya had started to allow Palestinians it expelled to go back. The Arab League said Monday Libya had agreed to halt the expulsions of Palestinians but the fate of the 1,000 stranded has yet to be resolved. At least 5,000 have already (Continued on page 7)

Libya withdraws bid for seat in Security Council

Move seen to have come after pressure; Egypt tipped to be replacement member

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Bowing to Western and Arab pressure, Libya has withdrawn its candidacy for a seat on the prestigious Security Council next year in favour of Egypt, diplomats said Monday.

Libyan officials disclosed their decision to European Union (EU) envoys in Tripoli and may announce it at the current meeting of o-o-Aligned Movement countries in Cartagena, Colombia.

In Tripoli, the Foreign Ministry confessed Libya had dropped its bid to a place on the U.N. Security Council.

"Libya has decided to postpone to another opportunity its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, and give its place to a brother country, to thwart any attempt to provoke discord between the African and Arab communities and Western countries," said a ministry statement carried on the official JANA news agency.

It also "thanked" all those who had supported the Libyan bid, particularly the Arab League and Organisation of African Unity.

The statement did not specify which country would replace Libya.

Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Al Montasar told the U.N. General Assembly earlier this month that his country was maintaining its bid for a Security Council place.

Libya, which has so far had only one term on the council, in 1976-77, had been endorsed by the African Group at the United Nations for a seat which, under a system of rotation, is to be filled by a North African country.

But the United States, Britain and France mounted a major campaign, both in world capitals and at the United Nations, to prevent Libya from being elected to a two-year council term, beginning next year.

This would have meant that the council would be without an Arab member in nearly 30 years.

Consequently several Arab states also spoke to Libya to relinquish its candidacy and Egypt was chosen instead, diplomats said.

The three Western states maintained they had enough votes to prevent Libya from obtaining the two-thirds majority of General Assembly votes needed to win election.

They argued that it would have been unconscionable for a country under U.N. sanctions to have a seat on the 15-member body responsible for international peace and security.

Libya, which says the two wanted men cannot get a fair trial in Britain or the United States, has offered to allow them to be tried at the seat of the World Court at the Hague, under Scottish law, London and Washington have rejected the proposal, saying it does not satisfy the Security Council's requirements.

Mogadishu port will reopen soon, Aideded opponents say

MOGADISHU (R) — A major rival of Somali faction leader Mohammed Farah Aideded said on Tuesday he was sure a pact would be reached soon to reopen Mogadishu port and end a dispute that has sent fuel and food prices soaring.

Osman Ali Hassan Ato, General Aideded's former financier, also said he was optimistic that a formula would be found to end Somalia's four years of civil war and more fighting would be useless.

"I am sure a formula acceptable to everybody (to reopen the port) is forthcoming very soon, much sooner than anyone expects... because people are working around the clock for a solution," he told Reuters at his south Mogadishu home.

Fighters loyal to Ali Mahdi Mohammed, a close ally of Mr. Ato and Gen. Aideded's arch-enemy, have stopped all operations at the south Mogadishu port since October 5 by firing at any ships approaching it.

Mohammad Kanyare Afrah, "interior minister" in the government set up by Gen. Aideded, said at the weekend its authorities would not "sit by and watch people continue to suffer" from the port closure.

Mr. Ali Mahdi and Mr. Ato accuse banana exporting companies of funding Gen. Aideded's government, which has no international recognition except perhaps from Libya, by paying taxes imposed on each carton of the fruit leaving Somalia through the port.

The port closure has increased petrol prices in the past week to 3,000 Somali shillings (42 U.S. cents) per litre from 2,000 shillings (28 cents) and diesel to 2,000 shillings per litre from 1,475 shillings (21 cents).

Rice rose to 3,900 shillings (55 cents) per kilogramme from 2,900 shillings (41 cents) and cooking oil rose to 9,166 shillings (\$1.30) per litre from 7,500 shillings (\$1.07).

Officials at the empty port said a dozen vessels, including two banana ships, were waiting on Monday to dock.

Mr. Ato said Mogadishu port had to be free of all taxation on imports and exports as there was no government.

The businessman-turned-politician, who broke with Gen. Aideded shortly before the last U.N. peacekeeping troops left Somalia in March at the end of a mission that failed to restore order, said the former army general's capture a month ago of the southwestern town of Baidoa would prove to be a failure.

"Obviously people will fight back and eventually defeat the invading forces led by Aideded," said Mr. Ato, accusing his self-styled national army of "committing genocide" in Baidoa by killing unarmed people.

The government led by Gen. Aideded, who was elected president of Somalia by supporters in June, says the takeover was virtually bloodless and fully within its rights to extend state control.

Mr. Ato, a member of the powerful Hahr Gedir clan like Gen. Aideded, said Baidoa's capture lost Gen. Aideded support among his people and they would not back any fighting over the port.

"Everything has to be settled peacefully," he said in the garden of his home with guards on the gates and two of his own "technicals" — four-wheel-drive hattlewagons mounted with heavy weapons — behind dirt barriers at both entrances to the area.

Two city blocks from Mr. Ato's house, Gen. Aideded's Somali Liberation Army technicians were stationed outside the former U.N. headquarters on the main road southwest of the capital.

Asked if he was afraid of assassination, Mr. Ato, still recovering from a wound to his left foot from a land mine blast last year, said nothing would deter him from the peace effort.

Asked whether he expected Gen. Aideded to advance into other areas of Somalia following his surprise thrust to Baidoa, Mr. Ato said: "I am sure he is retreating, and bleeding now as well."

The capture of Baidoa, regional capital of the fertile bay region, has pushed up the price of sorghum, a staple food in much of Somalia, from 25,000 Somali shillings per 50 kilogramme bag on Sept. 16 to 65,000 shillings per bag on Monday.

Mr. Ato denied being funded by the United States but accused Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi of sending two officials to see Gen. Aideded and giving him a total of \$4.5 million in June and August.

Gen. Aideded and Mr. Ali Mahdi say Libya has recognised the Aideded government, but there has been no announcement by Tripoli. A Libyan diplomat said he was not aware Libya had recognised it.

Gen. Aideded's "interior minister" Kanyare told Reuters on Saturday Libya had not provided the government with money and it had no need for arms as Somalia already had enough and was under an international arms embargo.

Ansari appeals to Norwegian government

OSLO (AFP) — Palestinian Soraya Ansari has decided to appeal to the Norwegian government for clemency, her defence lawyer said Tuesday.

Ms. Ansari was one of four Palestinians to hijack a German Lufthansa airliner in Somalia in 1977.

The Norwegian ministry of justice decided last week that Ms. Ansari could be extradited to Germany to stand trial. "The German prosecutor will argue for life in prison for Ansari, which should be given thorough consideration by the government," Ms. Ansari's lawyer Heidi Bache-Wigg said.

The German captain of the airplane was killed by the Palestinians inside Mogadishu in Somalia in 1977 before German special forces stormed the hijacked plane.

Germany has requested the extradition of Ms. Ansari, and Norwegian courts have decided that she could be handed over to German authorities. Her last chance lies with an appeal to the government of Norway.

Ex-GCC chief urges Iraq to adopt 'humane' system

AMMAN (J.T.) — The former secretary general of the Gulf-Cooperation Council (GCC), Abdullah Bishara, has called on Iraq to dismantle its "mediaeval way of thinking" and replace it with a "humane" system of government that caters to the needs of the Iraqi people and homogenises with today's world.

Mr. Bishara, a Kuwaiti national, said in an article in the London-based Al Hayat newspaper that King Hussein's position in this regard "stems from a desire to rid Iraq of the Saddam formula, ensuring the country's unity but with a humane federal state that would not allow a small faction to monopolise authority at the expense of Iraq's higher national interests."

Mr. Bishara, who now heads the Gulf Strategic Studies Centre, was responding to an interview that Al Hayat made earlier this month with Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Sahaf.

He said the international community had no confidence in whatever steps Iraq was taking and was determined to keep pressure on Baghdad until the regime fell.

Mr. Bishara said he was shocked by Mr. Sahaf's contention that Iraq was heading towards democracy, pluralism and democratic life.

The Iraqi regime "only believes in terror, genocide and the degradation of the Iraqi people," Mr. Bishara insisted.

He concluded by saying the only hope for Iraqis was a world agreement to lift them out of the "abyss."

Cairo University students stage rally in support of Brothers on trial

CAIRO (Agencies) — Dozens of students briefly demonstrated Tuesday at Egypt's largest university, calling for the release of Muslim Brotherhood activists jailed in a 10-month government crackdown.

There were no reports of violence, but 10 trucks carrying police were posted outside the sprawling campus of Cairo University. The campus was quiet by Tuesday afternoon.

Islamist-oriented groups control most student organisations at the university and exercise influence on student life. Slogans painted on the wall of the university's administration building said, "No to the military courts, no to corruption."

Since January, the government has detained 200 members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood.

Unlike militants fighting the government, the powerful Brotherhood has renounced violence in its pursuit of Islamic rule and has been allowed to operate openly for years.

The government has put 49 Brotherhood leaders on trial before military court, and another 30 have been referred to military investigators. Human rights groups and opposition parties have complained the trials are unfair because they do not allow for appeals and typically hand down stiff, quick sentences.

The crackdown is apparently aimed at discrediting the group in advance of parliamentary elections set for Nov. 29.

Thirty-three members of the outlawed armed Gamaa Islamiyah group who risk the death penalty for alleged attacks on police and civilians were Monday sent for trial at Egypt's high security court.

They are among 250 militants dubbed "the collaborators of Talaat Yassin Hammam" the former head of the Gamaa's military wing, shot dead by police in April 1994, legal officials said.

The first group of 33 are charged with 19 attacks between 1992 and 1993 in the Assiut region of southern Egypt in which 70 people were killed or wounded.

Two other groups, facing different charges, will be sent before the courts soon.

Dismissing militant threats, President Hosni Mubarak on Tuesday called Egypt a "secure country" for the millions of tourists who visit each year.

Attacks by militants in the south and the repercussions of the 1991 Gulf war scared off tourists for several years. The government says tourism is on a rebound now, with the number of visitors surpassing the record of three million set in 1990.

"Egypt is a unique touristic resort and no power on this earth will be able to disrupt this secure country and its generous people who protect and care for the rights of all tourists," Mr. Mubarak said in a nationally televised speech.

Mr. Mubarak was speaking to a week-long tourism conference that has drawn about 600 delegates — including 78 tourism ministers — on ways of enhancing the \$306 billion global tourism trade.

U.S. official: Mideast bank will pick up support after it is set up

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A senior American official on Tuesday said there would be an effective American involvement in the Amman economic summit and said the U.S. expected higher Arab and international participation in the proposed Middle East development bank after its establishment.

"Once (the bank) is up and running... some of the sceptics will join," said Susan Levine, senior vice-president of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). "It is not a significant budget burden" as some might have believed, she said.

Speaking at a press conference via Worldnet satellite, Ms. Levine stressed that the bank, projected to have \$5b in authorised capital and \$1.25 billion in initial paid-up capital, would not be a debt burden on shareholders.

While Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority proposed a development bank for the Middle East last year, many European and Gulf countries questioned the economic justification of the project.

The U.S., in the words of Ms. Levine, insists that the bank will not duplicate the work of other lending institutions in the Middle East.

"It will not be bureaucratic and (will be) designed to play a catalytic role," she said. "We're heartened that the Gulf states are taking a wait-and-see attitude. I hope they will join with time."

"No one is expected to contribute several millions of dollars... it is not a significant budget burden," she said pointing out that the OPIC share of \$125 million in support to the bank would be paid over five years.

"That's what the Gulf countries will realise... that it is financially feasible and that it needs little amount of money to make it function properly," she said.

Ms. Levine said there would be strong American participation in the summit, particularly in the fields of tourism, housing and energy.

While last year's Casablanca summit was a chance for the private sector and businessmen to get to know each other, implementation of projects will be at the Amman summit, she said.

"In Amman we say we're in business," she said. "We're actively talking to companies embarking on projects."

"It's no longer the theory of peace. It is the practice of peace," she added.

Saadoun restates Kuwaiti 'conditions' for better Arab ties

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Kuwait's parliament speaker said his country was ready to restore ties with states that sympathised with Iraq in the 1990-91 Gulf crisis if they called on Baghdad to comply with all Gulf war ceasefire resolutions.

"We are not against the restoration of ties with Arab peoples and even with Arab governments, but on one condition, which is that they ask Iraq to abide by all (U.N.) ceasefire resolutions," Ahmad Saadoun was quoted as saying on Monday.

Mr. Saadoun's remarks were in line with recent Foreign Ministry statements on ways of repairing Kuwait's five-year-old rift in relations with several states including Jordan, Sudan, Yemen and Mauritania and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Kuwait recently improved ties with several of these countries after they called for Iraq to abide by all U.N. resolutions, particularly the return from Iraq of any Kuwaiti prisoners of war still being held.

"Sudan and Jordan have not changed their stand till now," Mr. Saadoun asserted, adding both had urged the U.N. embargo on Iraq to be lifted but had "not called for the regime to implement all international resolutions."

But he said, Kuwait's relations with other countries such as Tunisia, Algeria and Libya had improved with an exchange of ambassadors.

United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan on Monday urged Gulf states and Kuwait in particular to let bygones be bygones, repair inter-Arab ties and support the lifting of sanctions against Baghdad.

"Our brothers in Kuwait have made mistake when they rejected rapprochement with Arab countries which are seeking a reconciliation," he told new ambassadors presenting their accreditations.

U.S., Bahrain said close to deal on 30 warplanes

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States is near agreement with Bahrain to temporarily base some 30 warplanes in the Gulf emirate in the absence of a U.S. aircraft carrier in the region, a senior U.S. military official said on Monday.

The carrier Independence will leave the Gulf this week, and the U.S. Air Force jets would help face any military threat from Iraq until the carrier Nimitz takes its place in early January, other defence officials said.

The United States already has about 200 air force warplanes based in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to offset any threat to moderate Gulf states from Iraq and Iran.

"I think I'm optimistic that at the end of... several days we will have a breakthrough arrangement," the senior military official, who asked not to be identified, told reporters as early as mid-December, but it would depend on how we looked at the tensions in the area."

The senior official told reporters at a briefing that the U.S. jets could leave Bahrain as early as mid-December, but it would depend on how we looked at the tensions in the area."

Algerian newspaper executive murdered

ALGIERS (AP) — Gunmen kidnapped and murdered an executive with a pro-government newspaper, while security forces reported killing 60 militants in violence one month away from a presidential election.

Abdul Wahad Sadaoui, 43, "commercial director of the newspaper 'Al Shaab' was abducted Saturday near his home in Chetta, a southern Algiers suburb, the newspaper said.

He was later found dead from bullet wounds. No one claimed responsibility for the killing, but suspicion fell on extremists who have gunned down more than 50 Algerian journalists for supporting the military-installed government.

More than 30,000 people have died in an insurgency that began after the government cancelled January 1992 legislative elections the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was expected to win.

Algerian authorities announced Monday that 60 armed Islamic militants had been killed during the past week by security forces, but made no mention of casualties among the army.

Meanwhile, militants and moderates have sharply criticised President Liamine Zeroual's planned presidential election Nov. 16.

On Monday, Abdul Hamid Mehri, secretary general of the National Liberation Front, said victory by Mr. Zeroual, a retired general appointed to the office, was ensured.

"We know that the elections are being prepared so that only one person can win," Mr. Mehri said in a statement released in several Western capitals. "There is no other theoretical possibility, and that person is President Zeroual."

Political analysts believe the latest threats against France are directly linked to a meeting between Mr. Zeroual and French President Jacques Chirac that is scheduled to take place during ceremonies later this month commemorating the 50th anniversary of the United Nation.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 Madeline
14:30 Ghost Writers
15:00 Tomorrow's World
15:30 Amazing Stories
16:00 I Love Lucy
16:30 Tarzan
17:00 Children's Programme
17:30 Minute
17:30 News in French
19:15 Ushuaia
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Anything for a Laugh
19:35 Arthur C. Clarke's Mystical Universe
20:00 Anything for a Laugh
20:30 The Bold and the Beautiful
21:15 The Other Americans
22:00 News in English
22:25 Frim
22:45 Drama — Law and Order
23:45 Doc. — Silk Road
00:30 Second Thoughts

PRAYER TIMES

04:20 Fajr
05:57 (Sunrise) Duha
11:21 Dhuhur
14:54 'Asr
17:05 Maghreb
18:22 'Isha

CHURCHES

Tel: 810740

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish Tel. 810740
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625756
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824538
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 649332
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Nidal Al As'ad 751672
Dr. Yousef Al Fagih 790194
Dr. Mazen Nhal 830435
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 744685
Firdous pharmacy 661912
Firdous pharmacy 708336
Al Asma pharmacy 637053
Nairouh pharmacy 626372
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 649495
Stancian pharmacy 637660

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Skies will be partly cloudy with winds westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 13/25
Aqaba 19/31
Dumars 11/28
Jordan Valley 16/32

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 25 Aqaba 31. Humidity readings: Amman 45 per cent, Aqaba 38 per cent.

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661131
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 843402
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 843402
Public Security Department 630221
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 897467
Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Ann 644281/6
Akil Maternity, J. Ann 642412/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 643362
Molhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Shmiciani 607071
Shmiciani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic Hospital 666127/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 771112/6
Army Hospital 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 6024030
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09893323

ZARQA National Hospital 09900560
Ibn Sina Hospital 09986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09990990
IBRAHIM
Princess Batina Hospital 02127555
Greek Catholic Hospital 02127275
The Al Nafesa Hospital 02127100
AQABA:
Princess Faya Hospital 03141111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
07:00 Damascus (RJ)
07:30 Jeddah (RJ)
08:30 Larnaca (RJ)
09:10 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
15:50 Madrid (RJ)
17:00 Paris (RJ)
17:25 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
18:00 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
18:10 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
18:15 London, Berlin (RJ)
18:15 Rome (RJ)

09:50 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
10:30 Berlin, Jeddah (SV)
12:15 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
17:20 London, Beirut (BA)
17:30 Athens (PK)
20:10 Sanaa (TV)
21:00 Beirut (ME)
21:05 Algiers (AH)
22:05 Larnaca (CY)
22:30 Athens (OA)
22:25 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
09:50 Rome (RJ)
10:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
10:40 Berlin, London (RJ)
11:10 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:40 Istanbul (RJ)
19:20 Colombo (RJ)
19:30 Aqaba, Cairo (RJ)
19:40 Calcutta, Bahrain (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:10 New Delhi (RJ)
20:35 Aden (RJ)
21:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:45 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
07:45 Beirut (ME)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/500
Banana 600
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 210/150
Carrot 450/200
Cauliflower 350/220
Cucumbers (large) 350/150
Cucumbers (small) 400/300
Eggplant 200/160
Garlic 750/600
Grape 650/450
Grape Fruit 220/140
Lemon 250/150
Marrow (large) 180/100
Marrow (small) 280/200
Olives (green) 380/280
Onion (dry) 250/150
Pepper (hot) 200/120
Pepper (sweet) 220/180
Pomegranate 350/250
Potato 330/220
Spinach 270/200
Spring Beans 820/680
Tomato 300/220
Tomato 120/70

adoun
estates
Kuwaiti
conditions
or better
Arab ties

AWAIT (Agencies) -
Kuwait's parliament speaker
has said his country was ready to
negotiate with Iraq in the
event of a crisis if they
did not threaten to comply
with all UN resolutions
regarding the crisis.
"We are not against the
restoration of the status quo
in the Gulf, and even with
Iraqi weapons, but on one
condition, which is a
minimum, which is that they
do not threaten to comply
with all UN resolutions",
said Saadoun in a statement
issued on Monday.

Mr. Saadoun's remarks
are in line with recent
Foreign Ministry statements
on the issue of Iraq's
weapons. He said that
Kuwait is not against the
restoration of the status quo
in the Gulf, and even with
Iraqi weapons, but on one
condition, which is a
minimum, which is that they
do not threaten to comply
with all UN resolutions",
said Saadoun in a statement
issued on Monday.

Kuwait recently improved
its relations with several of
the countries after they called
for it to abide by all UN
resolutions, particularly the
one from Iraq of an
unconditional promise of waiving
the field.

"Sudan and Jordan have
changed their stand on
the issue", Mr. Saadoun
said, adding that he had
urged the UN embargo on Iraq to
be lifted but had not called for
a complete lifting of the
embargo. He said that
Kuwait is not against the
restoration of the status quo
in the Gulf, and even with
Iraqi weapons, but on one
condition, which is a
minimum, which is that they
do not threaten to comply
with all UN resolutions",
said Saadoun in a statement
issued on Monday.

"Our brother in Kuwait
has made a mistake when
he said that the UN embargo
on Iraq is a mistake", he
said, adding that he had
urged the UN embargo on Iraq to
be lifted but had not called for
a complete lifting of the
embargo. He said that
Kuwait is not against the
restoration of the status quo
in the Gulf, and even with
Iraqi weapons, but on one
condition, which is a
minimum, which is that they
do not threaten to comply
with all UN resolutions",
said Saadoun in a statement
issued on Monday.

newspaper
murdered

week by security forces, he
made no mention of cases
involving the army.
Meanwhile, militants at
moderate have sharply
criticized President Hafez
Assad's planned
election to the
National Assembly.

Mr. Assad's secretary general
of the National Assembly
said that the president
was elected to the office
for a second term.

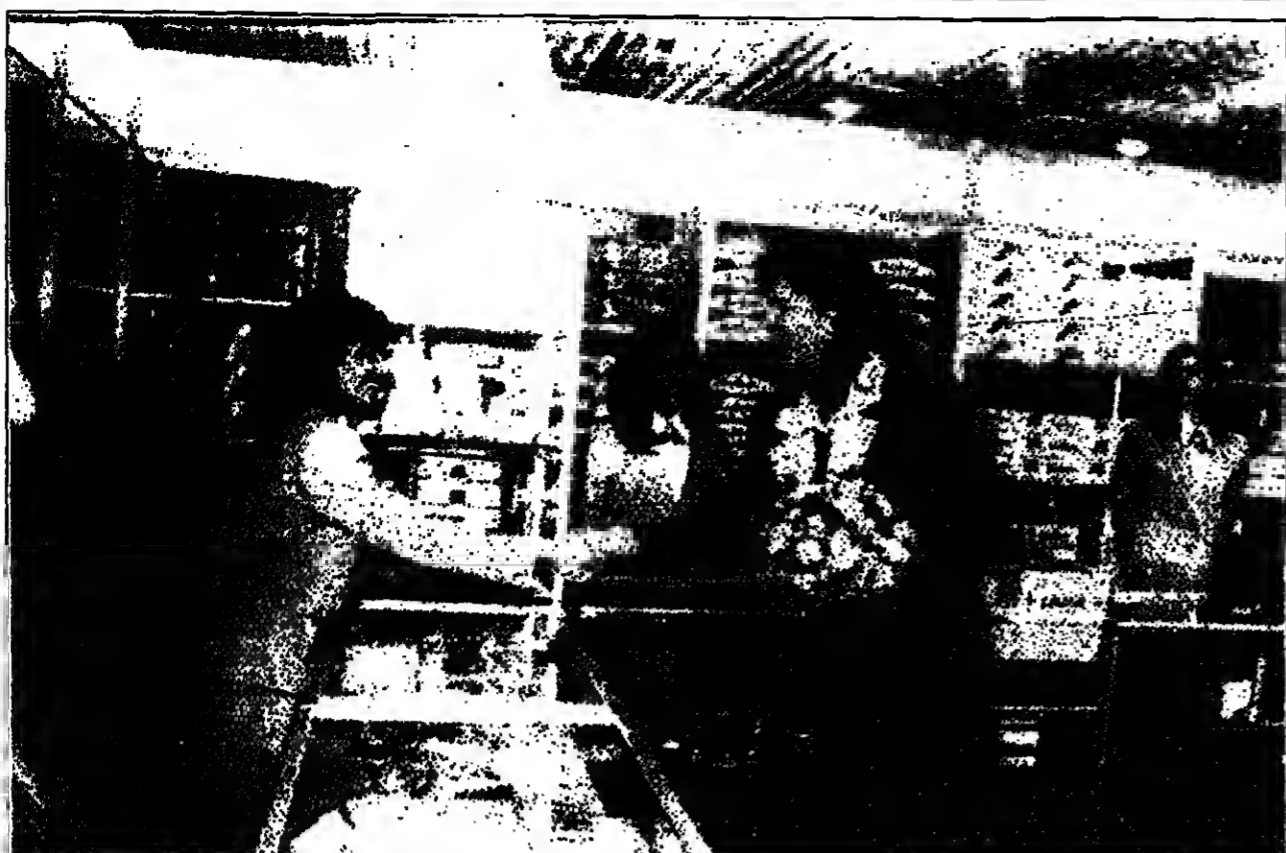
"We know that the
elections are being prepared
so that only one person
can win", Mr. Assad said
in a statement released in
Damascus. "There is
no other candidate possible
and that person is
President Assad".

Political analysts believe
the latest threats against
the opposition are aimed at
a meeting between the
opposition and the President
in Damascus. They said
the meeting was scheduled
to take place on the
occasion of the 50th
anniversary of the
United Nations.

12:00
13:00
14:00
15:00
16:00
17:00
18:00
19:00
20:00
21:00
22:00
23:00
24:00

MARKET PRICES
Apples
Bananas
Cabbages
Carrots
Cauliflowers
Cucumbers
Eggplants
Garlic
Lentils
Onions
Potatoes
Pumpkins
Spinach
Squash
Tomatoes
Zucchini

Home News



Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday congratulates Royal Jordanian ground staff at one of two new duty free shops which she opened at Queen Alia International Airport (Petra photo)

Queen launches fund-raising campaign at airport, opens new duty free shops

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday launched a fund-raising campaign entitled "Your Change Can Sow Seeds of Peace" at the Queen Alia International Airport (QAIA), a Royal Court statement said.

Posters and donation boxes are now located throughout the airport to encourage contributions to Jordanian development projects.

The bilingual colourful posters feature Noor Al

Hossein Foundation's (NHF) projects, which emphasise empowerment of women and communities, children's health and welfare, equal opportunity and excellence in education, protection of the environment and revival of culture and heritage.

Queen Noor, who is accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma and Chairman of the Board of Royal Jordanian (RJ) Walid Kurdi, thanked the staff of the national air carrier

for their invaluable help in realising this project, the statement said.

The Queen expressed her hope that such successful inter-sectoral cooperation will continue.

She also opened and toured the two new duty free shop branches, which will be open 24 hours a day and located at the last point before travellers exit the North and South Terminals.

During her visit, the Queen discussed introducing cultural components into the airport's interior and addressing the current challenges facing the airport, in particular the staff and operating conditions, the statement said.

Queen Noor was received by RJ President and Chief Executive Officer Nader Dahabi, Director General of Customs Nathmi Abdullah, NHF Executive Director Ibrahim Badran, Director of the Airport Abdul Hamid Kabari as well as senior officers of RJ and QAIA.

'UNDP to organise regional industrial development meeting'

AMMAN (Petra) — The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Jordan will organise a regional meeting in Amman Nov. 1 to discuss the development of the industrial sectors in five countries of the region, according to UNDP Resident Representative Jørgen Lissner Tuesday.

The five countries are Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco.

Mr. Lissner said the details of 80 industrial projects which are, in total, worth more than \$500 million, will be reviewed and that international investors will be invited to attend the meeting.

These include projects in the food, chemical and engineering industries. Twenty-three of those schemes, worth \$60 million, will be presented by Jordan's private sector.

According to Mr. Lissner, the proposed industrial schemes were earlier submitted by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) in investors who had expressed interest in them.

Mr. Lissner said his office has also agreed with the Ministry of Planning on the guidelines of a development programme worth \$5 million to be implemented in Jordan between the years 1996 and 1999.

The programme covers health, social and developmental projects mainly for the benefit of the less fortunate regions of the country, he said, adding that they will help Jordan improve the quality of its manufactured products and services.

UNDP will continue to provide assistance to Jordan in environment protection schemes, in the sustainable management of natural resources, and in providing training to Jordanian women in rural regions, Mr. Lissner said.

Japan donates \$97,955 in scientific equipment to Jubilee School

AMMAN (Petra) — Japan Tuesday agreed to donate \$97,955 in equipment for science laboratories at the Jubilee School and promised to expand its scientific assistance programme in the Kingdom.

Japanese Ambassador in Amman Takayuki Kimura signed the donation agreement with Ibrahim Badran, the executive director of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), which runs the school.

Mr. Kimura said Jordan and Japan maintain friendly relations and excellent ties which have prompted him to seek a future expansion of the scientific assistance programme to the Kingdom.

The present donation came within the framework of the Grant Assistance for Grass Roots Projects for Jordan established by the Japanese government in 1993.

The Japanese embassy said that the equipment is to be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning in scientific subjects at the Jubilee School.

The equipment includes computers and material for physics, chemistry and biology laboratories.

Under this new aid scheme assistance has so far been extended to four projects in Jordan amounting to \$204,921 in 1993 and \$548,759 in 1994, the embassy said.

Dr. Badran said the NHF greatly appreciated the Japanese government's donation.

Following the signing ceremony, the Japanese ambassador and his hosts toured the school and examined its programmes.

Mrs. In'am Mufri, advisor to Her Majesty Queen Noor, presented Mr. Kimura with the school shield.

According to the NHF, the Jubilee School, which was opened in 1993, offers gifted students a unique learning experience and a curriculum based on their special needs, capabilities and experiences.

The advanced academic programme, according to the NHF, meets the intellectual, effective and creative needs of gifted students and challenges them to achieve their full potential.



Noor Al Hussein Foundation Executive Director Ibrahim Badran, and Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Takayuki Kimura Tuesday sign an agreement whereby Japan will grant \$97,955 worth of scientific equipment to the Jubilee School (Petra photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Minister urges bakeries to hire citizens

AMMAN (Petra) — Ministry of Labour Secretary General Saleh Tarawneh Tuesday called bakery owners throughout the Kingdom to employ Jordanian workers in sales, driving and administrative jobs. In a statement to the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, Mr. Tarawneh said bakery owners should follow the example of the Armed Forces and the government-owned central bakeries which are entirely staffed by Jordanians.

Mr. Tarawneh called on the owners to observe the provisions of the labour and social security laws, which provide for fair wages and working hours.

Health minister visits new hospital

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Aref Bataineh Tuesday visited Yajouz hospital and inspected its various sections and the preparations made so far to ensure its full operation. Although the hospital will be officially opened in November to mark Jordan's celebrations of His Majesty King Hussein's 60th birthday, it will start receiving patients and providing medical services to the public as of Saturday, Oct. 21, the minister said.

The hospital, one of four newly established health care facilities in Jordan, was constructed on a 60 dunum plot of land at a cost of JD 4 million. The hospital can accommodate 100 patients.

Abul Ragheb reviews MENA participation plans with envoys

AMMAN (Petra) — China's Ambassador to Jordan Wang Chi Je said Tuesday his country will take part in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference on Oct. 29 and will be represented by a high-level delegation as well as a team of officials from China's major companies.

The ambassador was speaking during a meeting with Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb during which Jordanian-Chinese relations were reviewed.

During the meeting, which was held to mark the ambassador's end of tour of duty in the Kingdom, Mr. Abul Ragheb lauded the ambassador's efforts to strengthen his country's relations with Jordan at the social, economic and trade levels.

Ragheb met with Turkish Ambassador to Jordan Aykut Ceterge and reviewed with him preparations for the MENA conference.

Turkey, which will be participating in the economic event, will send an 11-member delegation that will include private and public sector representatives, Mr. Ceterge said.

Mr. Abul Ragheb and French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajolet also reviewed preparations for the MENA conference.

According to Mr. Bajolet, France will send three cabinet ministers in charge of industry, finance and transport as well as a delegation representing the private sector.

The minister also met with Russian Ambassador Alexander Shtanov who reaffirmed his country's intention to take part in the meeting later this month through two delegations representing the private and the public sector.

Mr. Sultanov said his country was looking forward to the conference which he viewed as part of continued efforts in the peace-process and the stabilisation of the Middle East region.

Meanwhile, Jordan's Ambassador to Greece, Amjad Majali, said Tuesday that Greece is also to participate in the MENA summit and will send a large delegation headed by its industry minister.

Mr. Majali said Jordan and Greece are soon expected to sign a maritime transport agreement in the course of their efforts to promote bilateral ties.

Contractors to seek financiers, partners for \$120m worth of projects

AMMAN (Petra) — Contractors in Jordan will seek financiers and partners at the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference to start up four projects worth \$120 million, according to Husam Hudhud, head of the contractors sub-committee set up by the private sector to prepare for the Oct. 29-31 conference.

Mr. Hudhud Tuesday said the projects include: the establishment of a \$50 million company specialising in leasing machinery and equipment at; a \$50 million land development plan to provide the infrastructure services such as electricity, water and telephone services for the eventual establishment of a housing estate; the creation of a \$10 million industrial zone on the outskirts of Amman; and \$10 million land development for a high technology industry.

The sub-committee, which groups contractors, engineering consultants and engineers specialising in water, energy and electricity, has been working over the past four months on preparing these projects, Mr. Hudhud said.

Meanwhile, Khalidoun Abn Hassan, president of the Amman Chamber of Industry, Tuesday said the chamber will be open to businesspersons from various countries during the coming MENA conference

providing information and facilitating their meetings with the local business community.

Working with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation and the Industrial Development Bank, said Mr. Abu Hassan, the chamber has prepared 69 industrial projects to be submitted to the coming conference.

providing information and facilitating their meetings with the local business community.

Working with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation and the Industrial Development Bank, said Mr. Abu Hassan, the chamber has prepared 69 industrial projects to be submitted to the coming conference.

3 politicians say government policies curtail public participation in political parties

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Political parties have played a major role in shaping Jordan's policies but their participation in the Kingdom's constitutional political life has been severely curtailed by the government, leaders of three political parties stated Monday.

These politicians also cited government policies as being largely behind what they see as the insignificant participation of citizens in the Kingdom's political life.

At a seminar hosted by the International and Islamic Centre for Research and Information entitled "Political Parties After Three Years of Legislation", Issa Madanat, head of the Jordanian Democratic Unionist Party, said that as a result of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty democracy in Jordan had suffered a setback.

"In order to have parliamentarians in support of the government line, the 1989 parliament was dissolved prior to the end of its full legal term, and a new election law, 'one-man, one-vote', was dictated," Mr. Madanat said.

Yusef Abn Bakr, head of the Arab-Islamic Democratic Movement (Do'a), accused the government of banning a scheduled opposition conference on the normalisation of ties between the government and Israel a few months ago.

On May 18, the government announced that a coalition of nine hardline political parties could hold a public rally, but reversed that decision 11 days later, banning the rally shortly before it was to convene.

He also charged that the government with "intimidating" Jordanians from joining opposition parties.

Mr. Bakr said the government was also behind the spread of rumours accusing some members of parties of being "spies" for Arab or foreign countries. He added that these sorts of accusations undermine the important role parties play in a democracy.

Jordan Democratic Populist Unionist Party Secretary General Abdul Razzaq Sa'id said research and study centres point out that Jordanians are not convinced of the role of opposition parties due to their "weak" positions. These studies do not, however, consider the reasons behind the circumstances that inevitably lead to the weakening of opposition parties.

Mr. Madanat said the large number of parties in the Kingdom was one reason for the small membership in the parties.

Mr. Madanat called for "merging" parties with the same political aims.

He said the five leftist parties could merge into one, and four other parties could also join forces under one banner. He did not elaborate.

He added that right-wing parties were "competing for a bigger share of the cake" and therefore would be less willing to merge.

The Jordanian Democratic Unionist Party, established in September, was the first party to be formed from a union of three left-wing parties: the Democratic Socialist Party, the Arab Democratic Party, the Democratic Progressive Party.

Mr. Sa'id said that his party and the Democratic Peoples Party plan to merge. He added that a lack of democratic practice among members of most registered parties has led to internal rifts.

Mr. Madanat said those who criticise political parties seem to have forgotten the decisive role parties played during 1940 and 1950, in protecting Jordan's national interest.

"Political parties stood firmly against the Baghdad Pact, Eisenhower's doctrine, the Anglo-Jordanian

Treaty, and the Middle Eastern Defence Pact, all of which were against Jordan's national interests," said Mr. Madanat.

Members of the audience at the seminar said that the incompetence prevalent among party members in adopting practical solutions to Jordan's problems was another reason behind citizens' lack of interest in political life.

In comments after the presentations, Zahran Jamous, a member of the audience, said parties should use "convincing arguments" and not only "emotions" in their political agendas.

Another attendee, Mohammed Azeih, said, "Political parties should look to the past to see how political convictions were effective in addressing and influencing the political climate."

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERT

* Concert by "Trio Linz-Wien" at the Ruwaaq Al-Balka, Fuheis at 8.00pm.

BOOK FAIR

* Fifth International Book Fair at the Universal Expo Centre, University Road.

LECTURES

* "Dialogue of Religions: Motives and Restrictions" by George Haddad at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6.00pm.

EXHIBITIONS

* Paintings by Janet Venn-Brown at Alia Art Gallery, First Circle.

* Abstract art by Ghazi Dulaimi at the Phoenix Gallery, Gardens Street.

* Paintings by Shakir Hassan Al-Said at the French Cultural Centre. Also showing posters on Louis Pasteur's achievements in the field of science.

* Works by Luis Azcarate at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman.

* A Retrospective Exhibition of Sculptures and Drawings (1965-1995) by Mona Saudi at Darat Al Funun.

* Graphic design by Iraqi artist Kazem Shamshoud at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Utheina.

* Painting and sculpture by Rafiq Lahham and Laith Al Turk at the Italian Language Centre Gallery, Shmeisani.

Sri Lankan army begins push in rebel-held north

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan forces thrust out from their forward lines in rebel-held Jaffna peninsula at dawn Tuesday, launching the first phase of an operation to take the rebel-held north, military sources told the state-owned National News Agency.

Operational headquarters in Colombo confirmed fighting against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was continuing in the north but would not say the long-awaited "final push" against the rebels had begun.

Military spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe told Reuters that a military operation had begun. "It's not the big one. It's simply an operation," he said.

In Trincomalee in the east, a Black Sea Tiger suicide squad blew up a government cargo vessel in the harbour, killing nine people, the military said.

A week-long lull in the

vicious separatist war ended Monday when 13 soldiers were killed and 23 wounded in an ambush on a foot patrol at Chenkalady, 16 kilometres northwest of the eastern port of Batticaloa, the military said Tuesday. Military sources put the death toll at 32.

The National News Agency, quoting top military sources, said the offensive in the northern Jaffna peninsula, codenamed Operation Sunshine, was the first phase of an operation to take control of the peninsula.

It said forces had pushed south from Achchaveli, south of the sprawling Palali Air Base. The operation was being directed by the commanders of the three armed services and Deputy Defence Minister Colonel Anuruddha Ratwatte.

In Trincomalee, a 70-ft (21-metre) vessel was mined by four suicide "Sea Tigers," civilian sources said. The vessel had been

provided to the navy by the Fisheries Ministry to transport food to the north, they said.

The military said two naval officers, five sailors and two civilians on board were killed. Six sailors were wounded.

"At the same time, one more Black Sea Tiger approached a naval craft secured alongside another jetty to launch an underwater attack," the military said. The frogman was killed and a bomb weighing more than 30 kilograms recovered, the statement said.

The attack recalled an attack on two naval craft in the harbour by LTTE suicide bombers on April 19 which shattered a three-month ceasefire and led to a renewal of a 12-year separatist war in which the government says more than 50,000 people have been killed.

The government and the military have promised a "fight to the finish" against

the Tigers but have not specified a date.

The plan is to weaken the LTTE as a fighting force to allow a development programme to begin in the north and give a devolution plan for minority tamils a chance of success.

The LTTE, which has rejected the devolution plan, is fighting for a homeland in the north and east of majority Sinhalese Sri Lanka.

The military has massed tens of thousands of troops, backed by tanks and artillery, on the Jaffna peninsula for what is being billed as the decisive assault to crush the guerrillas' 12-year separatist rebellion.

An all-out attack to take Jaffna town was definitely a possibility, army chief Lieutenant General Gerry De Silva said recently, without giving details.

"We have entered the final phase of the war," he said.



Ivory Coast police in Yopougon, a neighbourhood in Abidjan, stand by as the headquarters of the ruling party burns to the ground. The fire was started by opposition demonstrators who are actively boycotting presidential elections on Oct. 22 (AFP photo)

Pre-election unrest in Ivory Coast claims more deaths

ABIDJAN (R) — President Henri Konan Bedie, touring Ivory Coast ahead of Sunday's presidential election, is hardening his tone against opposition parties and pre-election unrest which has killed at least seven people.

"Brothers and sisters, once again, I urge you to vote to preserve in the eyes of the world the image of a free Ivory Coast, an Ivory Coast which is not and will not be the hostage of a minority," he told supporters in the town of Dabou west of the commercial capital Abidjan Monday.

"We say no to blackmail, to threats, to the respective ultimatums of the RDR and the FPI (main opposition parties) to which once again we say, that's enough," he said.

But La Voie, newspaper of the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), which spearheaded the campaign that brought multi-party politics in 1990, said in a banner headline Tuesday: "It's only just begun."

In the northern town of Koriogo, two people died

Monday in clashes between supporters of the opposition and the ruling Democratic Party during and after a banned march, according to state television and the government newspaper *Fraternite* Martin.

Ivory Coast, the world's top cocoa producer, has been hoping to capitalise on a reputation for stability to attract foreign investors.

Sunday's poll and general and municipal elections in November and December are the second multi-party elections since the end of single-party rule and the first since the 1993 death of Felix Houphouet-Boigny, who governed from independence in 1960 and cultivated a culture of peace.

The FPI and Rally For the Republics (RDR) urged militants to defy a government ban on street protests from Monday to demand a delay in Sunday's poll and a revision of voter lists.

Five people died on Oct. 2 during clashes between opposition militants and security forces when the opposition last ordered their

supporters onto the streets.

But witnesses and security officials said Monday's protests, which saw taxis, buses, barricades and a district office of the ruling party burned in popular districts of the main city Abidjan, were on a smaller scale than Oct. 2.

A senior gendarmerie spokesman said demonstrators killed a motorist who drove into their march in Koriogo, where the opposition had been hoping to capitalise on the Muslim vote before opting for an election boycott. The circumstances of the second death were not immediately clear.

Thousands of marchers built burning barricades and paralysed the central cocoa town of Gagnoa, stronghold of the FPI, Monday. Nine ruling party supporters were taken to hospital there after clashes with opposition activists, officials said.

Roads to and from Gagnoa were blocked Tuesday by trees which militants had felled as part of their protests.

Bangladesh opposition vows to avenge deaths as strike hardens

DHAKA (R) — Dozens of home-made bombs exploded in Dhaka and other Bangladeshi cities Tuesday, second day of an opposition-led four-day general strike aimed at toppling Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, witnesses said.

The explosions, which apparently hurt no one, were followed by marches by hundreds of opposition supporters urging revenge for the death of two comrades Monday.

On the first day of the strike, Mohammad Shah Newaz, a student leader of the opposition Awami League, was shot dead in the eastern town of Brahmanbaria.

Abdul Mannan of the Jatiya Party was killed in the western district of Kushtia in clashes with activists of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), local officials said.

Witnesses said more than 200 people had been injured in sporadic violence since the strike began at 6 a.m. Monday in 50 out of Bangladesh's 64 districts. Police arrested more than 50 protesters.

Opposition parties exempted 14 districts hit by floods that killed more than 400 people and made millions homeless.

Police confirmed the two deaths but put the injury figures at around 50.

Awami chief Sheikh Hasina expressed her deep anguish over the deaths and vowed "not to let their sacrifices go in vain."

Police said another man died in the southern city of Chittagong when a bomb he



A usually crowded main street of Dhaka is almost empty of traffic on Tuesday as a result of a major anti-government strike (AFP photo)

was making exploded. They said it was not immediately clear whose side he was on. Transport was halted Tuesday apart from a few rickshaws and most offices and businesses were closed, witnesses said.

The strike will be the longest continuous stoppage since Mrs. Khaleda took power after 1991 elections, killed as Bangladesh's first free polls following two decades of military rule.

The opposition, alleging

fraud in a subsequent election, wants Mrs. Khaleda to step down so general elections can be held under a neutral caretaker administration.

Almost all opposition legislators resigned in December after a long boycott of parliament and asked the government to dissolve the assembly, saying it had lost its legitimacy.

Mrs. Khaleda has refused to dissolve parliament and call elections, which are not due until March 1996.

Taiwan urges China to drop threat of force

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan Premier Lien Chan urged China Tuesday to remove barriers to better relations and drop a threat of attack to show good faith following an offer by China's president for summit talks.

"Although Chinese Communist leaders say they are willing to talk, the primary task for pushing ahead relations across the Taiwan Strait is for the Chinese Communists to renounce their military threat," Mr. Lien was quoted in a cabinet statement as telling parliament.

"Regarding (Chinese President) Jiang Zemin's recent remarks since he expressed a willingness for talks, (he) should remove the barriers," Mr. Lien was quoted as saying.

In a weekend interview with the U.S. News and World Report news magazine, Mr. Jiang was quoted as saying he would be willing to visit Taipei and Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui was "welcome" to visit Beijing.

Mr. Lee ordered his government Monday to study the offer in a rational manner. Other officials and analysts saw the offer as a hopeful sign severely strained relations may be mending.

China has regarded Taiwan as a rebel-held province since a civil war which ended in 1949, and it maintains a threat to retake the island by force if it tries to become independent.

Taiwan has repeatedly demanded that Beijing must drop its threat of force, saying it is not conducive to a common goal of eventual reunification.

Mr. Lien, more downbeat than Monday when he described Mr. Jiang's offer as "positive", cast doubt on the sincerity of China's position toward Taiwan.

"Relations across the (Taiwan) Strait cannot be seen as children's games. They should be faced with a serious attitude because they have a close relationship with the future and welfare of 21 million compatriots," Mr. Lien was quoted as saying.

He said barriers to better ties included China's vehement criticism of President Lee after his U.S. trip in June. Beijing accused him of plotting independence and said he should be tossed into the "dustbin of history."

Austrians to go to polls on Dec. 17

VIENNA (R) — Austrians will vote on Dec. 17 in an early general election forced when a "grand coalition" of Socialists and conservatives collapsed last week after failing to agree on a deficit-cutting budget for 1996.

Officials said the cabinet of Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky set the date at a meeting Tuesday. The decision must be backed by a special parliamentary committee, due to meet later in the day, but its deliberations are seen as a formality.

The outgoing coalition of Mr. Vranitzky's dominant Social Democratic Party (SPOE) and the centre-right People's Party (OEPV), which came to power after a general election a year ago, the shortest administration of the post-World War II Second Republic. It was the third that Mr. Vranitzky has led.

A weekend pollie opinion poll showed the anti-immigrant, anti-European Union party of the far right, led by Joerg Haider, was gaining in popularity and put its

support at 27 per cent.

The figure was one percentage point ahead of the OEPV and just three points behind Mr. Vranitzky's Social Democrats on 30 per cent, one of their lowest poll showings ever.

Both ruling parties suffered their worst results in last year's election but Mr. Haider's Freedom Party (FPOE) clinched nearly a quarter of the vote, giving it the highest number of parliamentary seats of any similar far right grouping in Western Europe.

Austria Monday was hit by a fresh wave of letter bomb blasts aimed at foreigners in an extreme rightist campaign which began nearly two years ago.

Mr. Vranitzky, speaking after Tuesday morning's cabinet meeting, called for a clean campaign fight in the current climate.

"It is the duty of all campaign participants to define their positions in such a way that the debate does not lead to political destabilisation," he said.

"In this regard, certain political practices of the

past should not be used, such as personal attacks against politicians," he added.

Mr. Vranitzky cited an FPOE leaflet in which he was named as a "multi-millionaire". He described this as untrue and designed to rally political opinion against him.

OEPV leader Vice Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel walked out of last-ditch budget talks with Mr. Vranitzky last Thursday, saying an early election was the only way out of the impasse.

The two parties, which have held power in Austria together or separately since the end of World War II, were split over how to cut the country's huge deficit. Mr. Schuessel wanted more public spending cuts, Mr. Vranitzky more taxes.

Mr. Schuessel, also speaking after the cabinet meeting, said he wanted a fair election campaign. He rejected charges that he wanted to cut benefits to pensioners, the sick and the unemployed.

Fresh violence erupts in Kenyan slum

NAIROBI (R) — Kenyan riot police shot and wounded two people Tuesday when violence erupted for a third day in a Nairobi slum where youths from rival tribes patrolled armed with stones, knives, clubs and spears, witnesses said.

Tension between youths from the feuding Luo and Nubian tribes in Kibera slum threatened to erupt into worsening violence. Four people have already been killed.

Witnesses said men of the anti-riot General Service Unit (GSU) swamped Kibera Tuesday morning to contain the violence. Two people limped out of one trouble spot with gun wounds moments after the feared GSU men moved in.

One man, aged 22, was shot in the thigh and a woman had a wound on the shin. Both were in tears as they were loaded onto a truck to be taken to hospital.

Overnight, unknown assailants attacked a paraffin store owner, razed his house and burned an old vehicle he owned, witnesses said.

"That sparked the morning session of fighting," a resident said. "people are so tense anything will lead to violence."

The three days of clashes have political overtones because the Luos of western Kenya dominate the Ford Kenya opposition party while the Nubians, whose ancestors came from Sudan, are perceived as supporters

of the ruling KANU party.

A witness said Nubians attacked a group of Luos trying to leave the slum to go to work Tuesday. "Nubians grabbed their goods and whipped them (Luos), forcing them back into the slum,"

Truckloads of police toured the slum and the mood was turning against them after the wounding of the two people, residents told Reuters from deep inside Kibera.

On the main street of Kibera, believed to be home to some 300,000 poor Kenyans, opposing factions threw stones at each other. "We will finish the Luos," a Nubian shouted. A Luo responded: "We will finish the Nubians."

Chinese animal reserve puts tigers on diet

SHANGHAI (AFP) — An animal reserve in northern Heilongjiang province has put its tigers on a diet because of a cash shortage, a newspaper reported Saturday. The Youth Daily said workers at the Hengdaohezi Breeding Centre had to resort to cutting back on the diet of the 76 northeast tigers after failing to find a way to finance their upkeep. The centre was set up in 1986 after the Forestry Ministry carried out a five-year survey and found that there were only seven surviving northeast tigers in China.

Beginning with two tigers, the centre, which is one of the 10 biggest breeding centres for endangered species in the world, has successfully bred 76 tigers which were facing extinction because of food shortages, the report said. During the first years of its operation, the centre depended on bank loans but had been unable to repay debts which amounted to 10 million yuan (\$1.2 million), leading to banks cutting its credit. It costs 10,000 yuan daily to feed the tigers with goats, chicken, eggs, milk and other nutrition and medicine.

Chinese stammerers form self-help group

BEIJING (R) — A group of several dozen stammerers have formed China's first self-help group to meet every Sunday to help each other overcome their speech difficulties, the Xinhua News Agency said. The Friendship Association of Stutterers was formed last June by Wang Peng, who used to be a stammerer himself. It meets each Sunday morning at a spot called the Corner for Capable People in the northeastern steel city Anshan, it said. Mr. Wang stammered for 12 years, before he cured himself with a special cassette tape, and he was so successful that he went to college and worked as an English teacher for the past 12 years, it said.

Pamela Anderson leaves hospital

SANTA MONICA, California (R) — Pamela Anderson, the blonde bombshell star of TV's *Baywatch*, was released from a hospital after suffering from "flu-like symptoms." "She was doing fine, and has gone home," said a spokeswoman for St. John's Hospital and Health Centre. She had no more details on the 27-year-old star's condition. Anderson entered the hospital Friday after complaining to her doctors of flu symptoms, but broadcast news reports said subsequent tests confirmed she is pregnant.

Japanese snub French orchestra

TOKYO (AFP) — There were no flowers or welcoming speech for the orchestra of Paris, in an official climate cooled by French nuclear tests, but the French musicians still packed out the first date of their Japanese tour. The orchestra inaugurated the new Kyoto Concert Hall Sunday under an accord when Jacques Chirac, then mayor of Paris, visited the ancient capital in western Japan three years ago. One of Mr. Chirac's first acts on becoming president this year was to order the resumption of nuclear tests which has angered Japan, along with other nations. The Kyoto authorities went ahead with the visit by the orchestra, led by Semyon Bychkov, but there were no flowers for Mr. Bychkov nor a welcoming speech before the concert, according to orchestra spokeswoman Nicole Salinger.

Chinese animal
serve puts tigers
on diet

ANCHAI (AFP) — An animal reserve in northern longjiang province has its tigers on a diet of cash shortage, newspaper reported today. The Youth Daily newspaper reported that the reserve had to resort to culling back on the diet of the tigers after a five-year surplus found that there were only seven surviving tigers in China, among with two tigers, centre, which is one of the 10 biggest breeding areas for endangered tigers in the world, has successfully bred 76 tigers which were facing extinction because of food shortage, the report said. The first years of its operation, the centre had been unable to pay debts which amounted to 10 million yuan (\$1.2 million), leading to bankruptcy. It costs 100,000 yuan daily to feed tigers with goats, chicken, eggs, milk and other nutrition and medicine.

Chinese
tamers form
self-help group

JIANGSU (AP) — A group of several dozen tigers have formed China's first self-help group to help each other overcome their difficulties, the China News Agency said. The group, called the Tiger Self-Help Association, was formed in June by Wang Peng, a tamer who has been taming tigers for the past 12 years, it said.

Pamela Anderson
leaves hospital

ANTA MONICA (AP) — Pamela Anderson, the blonde bombshell star of TV's Baywatch, was released from a hospital after suffering from a flu-like syndrome. "She was doing fine, and has gone home," a spokeswoman for St. John's Hospital and Health Centre said. She had no more than the 27-year-old actress' condition. Anderson left the hospital Friday after complaining to her doctors of flu symptoms. A broadcast news report said subsequent tests confirmed she is pregnant.

Japanese snub
French orchestra

TOKYO (AP) — There are no flowers or welcoming speech for the French orchestra of Paris in an official ceremony, but French nuclear tests, but each nuclear test, a French musician still eulogized the first day of the Japanese tour. The orchestra, which had been in Kyoto for an anniversary concert, then moved to Osaka. The tour was to be a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. The tour was to be a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. The tour was to be a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki.



South Korean soldiers display the dead body of a North Korean infiltrator and spy equipment on the southern side of the demilitarised zone (AFP photo)

S. Korean troops kill suspected Northern spy

IMJIN RIVER, South Korea (R) — South Korea said its troops shot and killed a suspected North Korean spy dressed in a frogman's suit Tuesday and launched a hunt for other possible infiltrators. The military set up 850 roadblocks along highways leading to the border, the last cold war era flashpoint, because it believed the man may have been part of a team. The Defence Ministry took journalists to the scene of the incident, where the first armed confrontation of its kind since 1992 took place in the early hours of Tuesday morning. They were shown the body of a man who appeared to be in his early 20s, his head spattered with blood and a bullet hole above his left eye. "I was on duty, when I heard voices coming from the bushes," said Corporal Chung-in-Jae, who fired the fatal shot. "Then I saw a vague figure and he was lying low. As I turned on my flashlight the figure stood up and raised his arm. I saw this as a dangerous sign and believed he was about to throw a grenade." Cpl. Chung said he and another soldier opened fire and the target staggered into the Imjin River where it was fished out. The infiltrator was wearing a black frogman's suit and flippers over a fake South Korean military uniform. The body was sprawled on a green army tarpaulin on the bank of the river about three kilometres from the demilitarised zone that has separated north and South Korea since an armistice ended the 1950-53 Korean War. Beside the corpse were two M-16 rifles, two knapsacks and what appeared to be a survival kit including several chocolate bars with Chinese writing on them, Aspirins and Penicillin. Earlier, Major General Chung Hwa-Eun told a news conference several other North Koreans may have slipped across the border since infiltrators usually worked in small teams. "We think about two to three of them were trying to infiltrate," Gen. Chung said. "It's noteworthy that the North Koreans tried to infiltrate into the South when the president is away. They know our army is always on alert at such times." President Kim Young-Sam, who left Monday for a two-week visit to Canada and the United States, was quoted by Yonhap News Agency as saying the apparent infiltration attempt proved the North's strategy had not changed. "As North Korea continues to maintain its belligerent stance towards South Korea by sending armed men to infiltrate the South, we must exert ourselves to safeguard our land," Mr. Kim was quoted as saying in Vancouver. "It is vivid evidence that the North's strategy towards the South has undergone no change," Mr. Kim said. Gen. Chung said the frogman was believed to have swum from the Yellow Sea off the Korean peninsula's western coast and entered the Imjin River, which meanders through the border region. The incident took place 1.5 kilometres west of the Bridge of Freedom, the entrance to the border crossing village of Panmunjom. Police and military forces set up 850 checkpoints, many of them manned by troops with black painted faces. It was the first infiltration from the Communist North since May 1992, when border guards clashed with a group of North Korean soldiers, killing three of them.

Indian
parties
divided over
Kashmir
autonomy

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's main political parties were divided Tuesday over how much power to delegate troubled Kashmir so elections can be held. A spokesman for Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress (I) Party said it was prepared to meet demands to give maximum autonomy to Kashmir, the country's only Muslim-majority state, plagued by a separatist conflict. "Anything can be considered within the framework of the constitution," said party spokesman Ved Prakash. Mr. Prakash's comments came ahead of an all-party meeting here due to open later in the day. It was called by the government to discuss organising elections to the Kashmir state assembly for the first time since 1987. The 1987 state assembly polls were marred by allegations of vote fraud. He stressed that the government was making "all efforts" to see that early polls are held in the troubled state. "People are getting fed up with militancy," he said. Three opposition parties said they supported former Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's insistence that greater autonomy should be a pre-condition for taking part in proposed elections. The Communist Party of India (CPI) said the government should seriously consider granting autonomy to a future elected government in Kashmir. "If the government is serious about keeping Kashmir with India, they will have to do this," said the CPI deputy leader Muqumuddin Farooqi, following a 90-minute meeting with Mr. Abdullah Monday.

Woman becomes oldest person in history

MARSEILLE, France (R) — Frenchwoman Jeanne Calment, who recommends laughter as a recipe for long life, has now, experts reckon, reached the greatest proven age of any person who has ever lived. The frail woman, who met the artist Vincent Van Gogh as a girl, reached 120 years and 235 days on Tuesday, passing the age of 120 years and 237 days at which Japan's Shigeichiyo Izumi died in 1986. Norris McWhirter, founder of the Guinness Book Of Records, says that claims of greater age than Ms. Calment's are unproven and many have been obvious hoaxes. He estimates that Ms. Calment's heart has beaten more than 4.25 billion times since she was born on Feb. 21, 1875. "On Tuesday, allowing for 29 leap days and defying all odds, she will become the human with the longest proven life of anyone in history," he wrote in the British daily the Times. Born in a world before cars, telephones, movies or planes in 1875, Ms. Calment was planning as subdued a day as possible at her retirement home in Arles in southern France. A celebration was planned for Wednesday. "I've wanted 110 years to be famous, I count on taking advantage of it," she quipped at her 120th birthday party. "I wait for death...and journalists," she said. She recommends laughter as a recipe for longevity and jokes that "God must have forgotten me." For skin care, she recommends olive oil and a dab of make-up. She reached French retirement age, of 65, the year France was invaded by Hitler's Nazis in 1940. But Ms. Calment's resilience kept her cycling until she was 100, smoking until she was 117, dreaming and cracking jokes at 120. Blind and almost deaf, she is confined to a wheelchair but still dreams. "I'd like to go to the moon," she said in 1989 on hearing it was the 20th anniversary of astronaut Neil Armstrong's landing on the moon. "Queen Jeanne", a widow for 50 years, has outlived her descendants. Her daughter died in 1934 and her grandson, a doctor, in 1963. She has been the object of research into her memory, especially a childhood meeting with Dutch painter Van Gogh. The painter may have bought canvases from her father's shop. She has described him as "ugly as sin...Bad tempered, a grumbler and smelling of alcohol." Ms. Calment, who was 21 when the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens, has survived 17 French presidents. She has no financial worries, and a good reason to keep laughing. When she was 90, a lawyer agreed to pay her 2,500 francs (\$500) a month until she died on condition he would inherit her house in Arles, a system common in France. Since then, the lawyer has paid her more than 900,000 francs (\$180,000), three times the value of the house.

India's top film star walks out of jail

BOMBAY, India (AP) — Hundreds of fans pushed and shoved to get a glimpse of film star Sanjay Dutt as he walked out of prison on bail Tuesday, where he was held for two years awaiting trial on terrorism charges. The hero of dozens of Hindi movies, was released by a judge after giving a bond of 500,000 rupees (\$16,000) and surrendering his passport. Dutt's case focused attention on India's unwieldy judicial system that keeps tens of thousands of suspects jailed for years awaiting trial. His release also encouraged human rights activists who charged that India's anti-terrorism laws are draconian. On Monday, India's Supreme Court ordered Dutt to be released, overruling a lower court which had repeatedly denied him bail. "I am very happy. I was waiting for this moment," said Dutt, 36, who was in prison for two years. It was not clear if or when he would complete any of the 13 films he was shooting simultaneously, which were interrupted when he was jailed. Wearing faded blue jeans and a loose white shirt, Dutt was escorted out of the prison gate by his father, Sunil Dutt, a member of parliament and also a former movie actor. From inside his vehicle, Dutt waved to the crowd and folded his palms in the traditional Indian greeting. "Sanju, Sanju," his fans shouted, calling him by his nickname. Some waved huge portraits of the star. Before he left the prison, the movie star distributed more than 4,000 sweets to inmates in Bombay's Arthur Road Jail, in a traditional gesture of celebration. Dutt is charged with conspiracy in the bombing which killed 317 people in a synchronised attack on skyscrapers, hotels and office buildings in India's financial capital, Bombay, in 1993. Dutt was found with weapons and ammunition allegedly supplied by gangsters who were suspected of plotting the explosions in Bombay, India's worst act of terrorism. He denied any connection with the bomb plot, and said he was holding weapons for the protection of his family. The Bombay blasts were widely believed to have been organised by Muslim militants to avenge the deaths of hundreds of Muslims during the destruction of a Muslim shrine by Hindus in the holy town of Ayodhya.

Japan opposition blocks
Murayama's religion bill

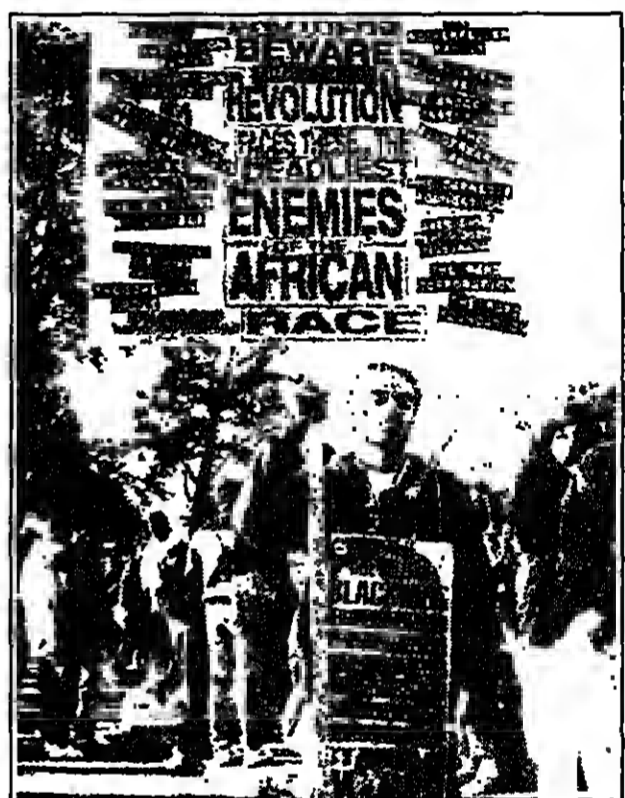
TOKYO (R) — Japan's government submitted key legislation to revise a religious law to parliament Tuesday but the opposition refused to consider it, saying the bill was politically motivated. As soon as Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's government submitted the bill, the opposition Shinshinto (New Frontier Party) moved to block deliberations by refusing to convene a special committee to discuss the legislation. "The proposed revision contains many problems and, in short, could infringe on freedom of religion and the principle of separation of church and state," senior Shinshinto lawmaker Kazuo Aichi told a news conference. The government said the legislation was prompted by the crimes blamed on the Aum Domsday Cult, the group accused of the nerve gas attacks on Tokyo subways which killed 11 and sickened more than 5,000 passengers on March 20. The amendments to the law governing religious groups, if enacted, would allow the government greater freedom to check the financial accounts and other documents of religious groups. Mr. Murayama said the revision of the 1951 religious organisations law was his top parliamentary issue and vowed to push it through the assembly before the current session ends on Nov. 13. But Mr. Aichi, in charge of Shinshinto's religious affairs, rejected the proposed revision as a government plot to undermine his party. "The real motive behind the proposed revision is...to strike a blow at Soka Gakkai, one of the principal supporters of Shinshinto," Mr. Aichi said. He said the ruling coalition had aggressively started to talk about the religious law only after Shinshinto's resounding success in upper house polls in July. Shinshinto, backed in part by members of the huge Buddhist lay group Soka Gakkai, fared well in the elections against the ruling coalition made up of Mr. Murayama's Socialists, the Liberal Democratic Party and the small Sakigake Party. "It is crystal clear that the ruling coalition has a political motive behind it," Mr. Aichi said. Meanwhile a record number of Japanese no longer support Prime Minister Murayama's coalition government, according to a newspaper poll published Tuesday. The financial daily Nihon Keizai Shimbun said 43.9 per cent of nearly 1,800 people polled last weekend said they did not support Mr. Murayama's three-party government. The figure was slightly up on the previous record for the Murayama administration of 43.6 per cent who said they opposed it in a similar poll in August. Mr. Murayama's coalition has steadily lost favour since coming to power 16 months ago because of its handling of the economy. Asked when the next general election should be held, 42.8 per cent favoured a date between next April and September, followed by 25.3 per cent wanting it before the end of this year and 20 per cent preferring to have no election until after 1996. A general election could not be held until mid-1997. The only good news for the government in the poll was that voters were also more disenchanted with the main opposition group than in August's survey. The poll showed that support for Shinshinto had fallen to 13.6 per cent from a record high of 20.3 per cent when the opposition made major gains in upper house elections in July.

Quebec
leader under
attack for
race, gender
comments

OTTAWA (AFP) — Lucien Bouchard, the popular leader of Quebec's separatist movement, found himself under attack Monday for his remarks about race and Quebec women having a low fertility rate. After a week which saw Mr. Bouchard apparently boost the separatist campaign, with one opinion poll showing the separatists likely to win the Oct. 30 referendum on establishing a sovereign French-speaking state of Quebec, he was under attack for his remarks at a weekend rally. Complaining that Quebec's population growth was not keeping momentum with the rest of Canada and North America, Mr. Bouchard asked: "Do you think it makes sense that we have so few children in Quebec? We're one of the white races that has fewest children, that's really something." "That suggests we haven't solved our family problems," Mr. Bouchard had planned to be absent Monday from Canada's Federal House of Commons, where he is leader of the official opposition, to spearhead the separatist campaign in Quebec. But he had to make a last-minute change to his plans when it became apparent that federal Prime Minister Jean Chretien would use Mr. Bouchard's gaffe on race and gender for a new counter-attack. Mr. Chretien, a French-speaking Quebecer, taunted Mr. Bouchard in the Commons. "According to him," Mr. Chretien said to cheers from federalist members of parliament, "to be a good Quebecer, you have to be white rather than coloured, you have to be French rather than English-speaking, that's for sure...and if you're a woman, then maybe they should have more children."

Multitude of U.S. blacks dedicate
themselves to unity, brighter future

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of American black men promised to improve their lives during an unprecedented demonstration at the U.S. Capitol led by Nation Of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. "I pledge that from this day forward, I will never raise my hand with a knife or gun to beat, cut or shoot any member of my family or any human being, except in self-defence," they chanted Monday at the climax of the day-long gathering. Mr. Farrakhan's "million man march" called together black men for a peaceful day of praying, singing and reveling in racial unity. The crowd, estimated by the U.S. Park Police at 400,000, stretched for 12 blocks down the grassy expanse, from the foot of the Capitol to the Washington Monument. March organisers asserted the crowd numbered 2 million. As the rally's dramatic finale, Mr. Farrakhan spoke for 2 1/2 hours, often addressing white America. "White supremacy," he said, "is the root of America's suffering." "That makes you sick," Mr. Farrakhan said, "and you produce a sick society and a sick world." Mr. Farrakhan urged the men to go home and join black organisations — even those that refused to endorse his rally — to take bold of political power, unite against racism and cleanse black communities of crime, drugs and violence. He brushed aside critics who have condemned his inflammatory statements about Jews, Catholics, gays and Asians, saying he had divine guidance in bringing to Washington the largest assemblage of black Americans since the 1963 march on Washington. "Whether you like it or not, God brought the idea through me, and he didn't bring it through me because my heart was dark with hatred and anti-Semitism," he said. "If my heart was that dark, how is the message so bright?" The day was chilly but bright, the mood serious yet buoyant. "There is no violence here, no racism," said Omar Holt of Detroit. "It's very moving." Young men dressed in jeans, sweatshirts and jackets dominated the crowd. But men of all ages were jammed shoulder-to-shoulder in front of the stage. Others climbed onto statues, light posts and trees for a better view. "It's a healing feeling to see so many black men come together, and not a whole bunch of violence or drugs or all that stuff," said



An unidentified man holds signs during the "million man march" in Washington D.C. (AFP photo)

Donald Simms of the Brooklyn Borough of New York City. "This whole thing is about self-respect." People lined up 10-deep around the food vendors, and the mixed aromas of barbecue and vegetarian curries filled the air. Scores of Nation Of Islam members, standing erect in suits and their trademark bow ties, lent an air of solemnity. Civil rights veterans Jesse Jackson, Rosa Parks and Dick Gregory were among dozens of back-to-back speakers who spoke from behind bulletproof glass. Stevie Wonder sang briefly and Maya Angelou read a poem urging the crowd to do right by itself and "save your race." Giant speakers and video screens were set up around the mall. The event often had the feeling of a revival meeting, with men clapping and singing along with church choirs, then bowing their heads in prayer. At one point, cardboard boxes and plastic bags were passed through the crowd for contributions to defray the cost of the event and began a black economic development fund. Each time a bag was filled, organisers hoisted it into the air to the cheers of the crowd that waved dollar bills in the air. By mid-morning, co-organiser Benjamin Chavis Jr. said the crowd had passed the 1 million mark. The Park Police, basing their estimate on pictures taken from helicopters, did not provide their 400,000 figure until the rally concluded at dusk. Several women spoke on stage, but few were scattered through the crowd. Mr. Farrakhan had asked them to stay home to pray, fast and teach the children. He also asked all black Americans to stay home from work or school and avoid spending money. At a speech in Austin, Texas, a thousand miles from the rally in Washington, President Bill Clinton appealed to both whites and blacks Monday to "clean our house of racism" before it tears the nation apart. He cited bigotry on both sides, making clear — although unspecified — references to Mr. Farrakhan and to Mark Fuhrman, the Los Angeles police detective in the O. J. Simpson case. "The rift that we see before us...is tearing at the heart of America," Mr. Clinton said in a lecture at the University of Texas. Focusing on race relations, he called upon all Americans to do more to recognise the roots of black pain and of white fear, "to see each other as more than enemy faces, all of whom carry at last a sliver of bigotry in their hearts." Mr. Clinton honoured the crowd that jammed the national mall to the capital, referring to participants as "black men taking renewed responsibility for themselves, their families, their communities." He also said the gathering should help white Americans better understand "that most black people share their old-fashioned American values." But, in remarks aimed at Mr. Farrakhan, Mr. Clinton said, "one million men are right to be standing up for personal responsibility. But one million men do not make right one man's message of malice and division."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1971
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية المستقلة

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Clearing mess with justice

ANOTHER TIMELY intervention by His Majesty King Hussein promises to stop the reign of legal anarchy over passports and citizenship rights in our country. In fact if yesterday's press reports are accurate, then the legal mess that has permeated society in recent months is already being solved.

The 1988 decision to cut off all legal and administrative links to the West Bank had led to confusion over whether West Bankers were still entitled to passports valid for five years. The concerned authorities had interpreted the 1988 decision as tantamount to loss of citizenship rights by all "former Jordanian" citizens, namely those domiciled west of the river. The High Court of Justice also made a ruling to this effect which added credence to the legal consensus then that the people of the West Bank were no longer entitled to all the rights and privileges of citizenship including the acquisition of the five-year passports.

Ever since that ruling, the Ministry of Interior has been authorising the issuance only of two-year passports to Jordanians in the West Bank even when the officials knew that the phase we all were going through was temporary. Belatedly, however, this seemingly benign policy took a turn to the worse when more and more Jordanians of Palestinian origin including some residents of the East Bank, were denied automatic renewal of their 5-year passports. What added more confusion to the entire effort of adjustment to the new situation was the introduction of a system comprising green and yellow cards to Jordanians and "former Jordanians" who crossed the river back to the country.

Many of us have since voiced concern that citizenship rights can be altered or denied only on the strength of new legislation. Even then, any such new laws cannot have retroactive effect, since this is the spirit of both our organic law and the customary international law.

Now the King has decided to step in and order the authorities to cease and desist from changing passports till there is in place a sovereign Palestinian state and Jordanians of Palestinian origin opt or refuse to acquire Palestinian citizenship.

Till that moment in time arrives, Jordanians, all Jordanians, whether new or old, must continue to be regarded and treated as citizens of this country — entitled, as they should be, to the rights and privileges associated with this citizenship.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

The implementation of concerned U.N. resolutions is the ideal solution to the question of land-ownership where refugee camps are established, said a writer in Al Ra'i Tuesday. The resolutions call for the repatriation of the Palestinian people living in Arab countries. However, until the time of repatriation, the government should buy these lands from their current owners and lease them to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA). UNWRA could then facilitate the camps with basic services, suggested Tareq Masarweh. The writer echoed King Hussein's statement that the refugees would remain Jordanian citizens until the time came for them to choose between Jordanian and Palestinian nationality, after the establishment of a Palestinian state. Further delays in solving the camp-problem, he said, would only complicate matters and could open the door to more rumours about the fate of refugees. When the final settlement for the Palestinian refugees is concluded — either through repatriation or compensation — said the writer, the government would then have a free hand to deal with the land leased to UNWRA.

Sultan Al Hattab, a columnist in Al Ra'i, called on the Ministry of Health and the Jordanian Medical Association (JMA) to open a dialogue and reach common ground over the question of Jordanian medical participation in the MENA economic summit. Many Jordanian doctors complained that they were barred from taking part in the event. The bar was issued by the JMA because participation would be seen as normalisation of relations with Israel, which will be represented at the conference, said the writer. Other Arab countries and organisations cannot be blamed for staying away from the conference when Jordanians have shunned the meeting under the pretext of averting normalisation with Israel, said the writer. He added that the JMA and other Jordanian professional associations should be flexible allowing their members to act freely in matters related to their profession.

Washington Watch

The million man march

By Dr. James Zogby

THE MILLION Man March on Washington promised to be one of the most significant events in recent African American political history. Whether or not it succeeded in its goal to bring one million African American men to the steps of the U.S. Congress, the event succeeded in shaking up both the white and black political establishments.

The march was the brainchild of Minister Louis Farrakhan, current leader of the controversial sect which calls itself the Nation of Islam (NOI).

The NOI has never grown beyond 10,000 to 20,000 members. By contrast, more than one million African Americans are orthodox Muslims who reject the racial separatism of the NOI. Farrakhan and others have long argued that his influence is much greater than the size of his group might indicate. Without much advertising, Farrakhan can attract more than 20,000 African Americans to rallies he organises on a regular basis in most major U.S. cities.

The reason for his appeal is clear. As an extension of his belief of black racial separation, the NOI preaches black pride, self-reliance and anger at both the condition of the black man in America and the negative role of the white power structure on the black community.

This is black nationalism with a theological twist and it strikes a resonant chord among many in the African American community.

Farrakhan's call more than 10 months ago for a "million man march" ended up energising African American activists nationwide. The march is to be a march of men who are atoning for the failure to honour their families and their community. Furthermore, by calling on African Americans — even those who do not march — to absent themselves from work or even shopping, the march is to serve as a call to the black community to realise its social and economic power and its responsibilities for self-improvement.

Initially dismissed by most of the U.S. media, political leadership and even established African American leaders, the march and Farrakhan are now drawing significant national attention.

It appears Farrakhan succeeded. Four hundred thousand people gathered in Washington, while millions watched on television, and the march and its goals drew tremendous support in all segments of the African American community.

The success was not Farrakhan's alone. Although the march was his idea and its message was clearly inspired by his philosophy, the march became the possession of a network of African American "nationalist" activists who have been labouring in their communities for over 30 years.

While the mainstream African American civil rights leaders, who formed coalitions with liberal whites (especially American Jews), have participated in Democratic Party politics and have been accommodating to compromise, the "nationalists" have been more militant in their demands. They have formed the bedrock of grass-roots action of the urban African American community, but have been largely

unrecognised in the nation's media.

It is important to note that as conditions for African Americans have worsened over the past few decades, a generation of young African Americans have been more responsive to the message of the nationalists than that of the mainstream civil rights liberals.

Arab Americans have long known and worked with the black nationalists. It was they who first supported Palestinian rights in the 1960's and who sided with all of our community's struggles during the 1970's and 1980's to fight political exclusion. But as relations soured between inner city Arab American merchants and the African American communities they served, it was some of these same nationalists who organised against the Arab merchants.

While the more mainstream civil rights leadership saw the route to African American power through integration in and accommodation with white society, the nationalist ideologues were inclined to independence and self-reliance.

This comfortable fit between Farrakhan's message and that of the black nationalists is what helped to build support for the march in many

This reaction is a recognition of the march's success. By creating such a tidal wave of support for the march, the event itself gained more endorsers and at least muted some of its potential opponents. It remains easy for some to criticise Farrakhan, but in fact the march became larger than its organisers.

There was in the effort to organise this event a virtual "African American Declaration of Independence," at least for those who laboured to build it. While past civil rights marches have also been successful (Martin Luther King's historic 1963 march drew 250,000), they relied on coalition efforts to provide funding, organising and political support. This march was funded and organised by African American nationalists. They may well emerge from this event as a newly powerful and independent political force in the U.S.

While such an effort will not command the support of the majority of African Americans, it could still have a significant impact on racial and electoral politics on the national and local levels.

The power of this new effort was seen in those who endorsed the march. If it is true, as the march's supporters argued, that the African American political leaders who rejected the march did so out of fear of a white backlash negatively affecting their careers, it is equally true that many of the later endorsers of the march (including both African American leaders and some white elected officials) did so out of fear of a black political backlash cutting short their careers. Such was the power of the march.

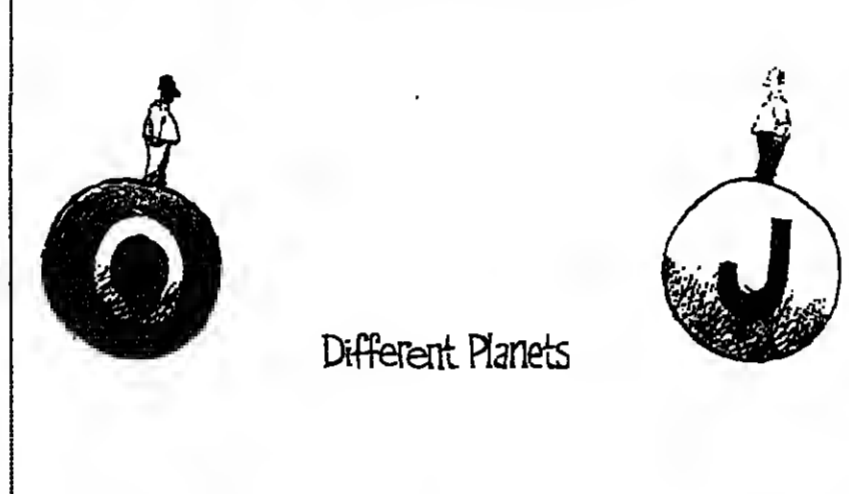
The values promoted by the march's leaders were also critical to the future of the African American community. In this regard, the march succeeded by generating a debate within the African American community on the responsibilities of black men and the end for the community to heal itself of broken families, drug abuse, crime and violence.

And finally, there was genuine respect paid to those who organised this massive effort. The sheer numbers alone and the logistical undertaking required to make it work earned praise from many quarters. The fact that it all happened over the course of nine months with virtually no attention from the media and essentially no advertising has awakened many whites to the reality that there is indeed a deep division between blacks and whites in America.

"All this," one white friend said to me, "happened without any of us knowing about it — how did it happen?"

The march was a reality check for an America still wrestling with the verdict in the O.J. Simpson murder trial and recently discovering General Colin Powell.

There is a deep division between the races, and this march reminded Americans of that fact and of how one new powerful trend within the African American community intended to improve their economic and political situation in this country.



Afghan political landscape changes rapidly

By Mushahid Hussain
Middle East International

IT HAS been a long hot summer for war-torn Afghanistan. Among various political and military moves likely to impinge upon its future are the emergence of a new alignment against the regime in Kabul of Burhanuddin Rabbani; the emergence of the Taliban as a military force precisely one year ago; and the consequent tensions between Islamabad and Kabul on the one hand, and Islamabad and Tehran on the other.

After a number of setbacks earlier in the summer, the Taliban secured the capture of most of western Afghanistan, including the city of Herat, on September 5, as well as the strategic air base at Shindand near the Iranian border with a booty of 41 planes. The pro-Rabbani governor of Herat,

Commander Ismail Khan, fled to Iran along with his supporters and the fall of the city means that the region bordering Iran is now clearly in the hands of the Taliban, who today control 13 of Afghanistan's 32 provinces. President Rabbani still controls Kabul, along with five other provinces. The Taliban's ally based in the north, Uzbek warlord General Rashid Dostam, has control over eight provinces. The Taliban and Dostam have joined hands with Rabbani's arch-rival and head of the Hizb-i-Islami, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, to mount what is being termed the "decisive assault" on Kabul.

These developments on the ground have coincided with the sharp deterioration of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The day after the Taliban's capture of Herat, which the Kabul regime attrib-

uted to Pakistan's covert support and sponsorship of the group, an angry mob stoned Pakistan's embassy in Kabul, shot dead one of its staff and ransacked the building. This was the second assault on the Pakistani embassy since the Rabbani regime took over, the first being in February 1994. This incident provoked a sharp backlash from the Pakistani government, which accused the Rabbani regime of instigating the attack, a charge denied by the Kabul authorities, who also expressed "regret" over it.

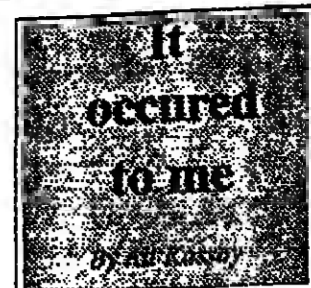
Iran, which has been supporting the Rabbani regime, was disturbed by the Taliban's success so close to its borders, since it sees the Taliban's main aim as establishing a base for anti-Iran operations from Afghanistan. The Iranians are also said to share the concern of the Rabbani regime that this grouping has Pakistani support.

In order to placate Iranian apprehensions on this account, the Pakistani foreign minister visited Tehran on September 16. In an interview with the English-language Iran News on September 18, Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati echoed Kabul's allegations about Pakistani links with the Taliban, saying that "foreign countries should not meddle in Afghan affairs and the experiences of the past have shown that foreign interference only complicates the situation."

In a related development, international mediation efforts on Afghanistan have been stepped up with the arrival in Pakistan of the Organisation of Islamic Conference Secretary-General Hamid Gahid, and the special envoy of the United Nations secretary-general, Mahmoud Mistry. Prior to their arrival, the Afghan foreign minister said on September 18

that "Mistry must put foreign interference in Afghanistan at the top of his agenda," which is an indirect criticism of Pakistan.

The foremost task of these mediators, particularly the U.N. envoy, is to prepare the modalities for transition to an interim, national government, which, in turn, would provide the framework for elections in which all Afghan factions would participate. A prerequisite of any such effort would be to get President Rabbani to step down from office, since his term expired on December 28, 1994 (his stay in office continues to be extended because of the in-fighting among the Afghan warring factions). This seems to be an uphill task, particularly when developments on the ground in Afghanistan in recent weeks seem to have overtaken the rather slow work of diplomats and mediators.



Pavement parlance

Some new arrivals in Jordan expressed to me their surprise at seeing Jordanians, out for a walk, shunning the pavement to walk in the middle of the road. A month or so later, their surprise doubled when they found themselves doing exactly the same curious thing, which only confirms the Arab proverb that "he who lives forty days among a certain people becomes one of them."

The explanation is simple. Our pavements, whatever intentions they purport to serve, are not designed for the convenience of pedestrians out on a gentle amble. Jordanians, we explain to the uninitiated, scorn the leisurely walk as an indolent pursuit. In their keenness to keep healthy, fit and alert, and to develop their thighs and sinews, they build their pavements like a commando assault course.

To develop people's climbing skills, pavements are built so high that one virtually needs mountaineering equipment to scale them. People who are accompanied by children gain an added advantage from having constantly to lift and deposit the infant and his perambulator, which does an infinity of good to the biceps and triceps.

In addition, the hanging branches on the trees that adorn our pavements are purposefully allowed to hang so low that one often cannot walk upright. This is not due to the laziness of municipal workers who do a bad job of pruning the growth, but to an astute plan to make the pedestrian walk a twenty metre stretch while stooped, which develops his back muscles and protects him against lumbago.

Nor are trees the only obstacles. One has a wide choice of lamp posts, the guide cables that support them, or the posts of billboards. Building contractors contribute to this worthy cause in their belief that pavements are the logical depository for their sand, gravel, and cement. To circumnavigate the piles of assorted construction materials one needs to go down onto the road at regular intervals, which develops his alertness and agility, and sharpens the senses as he negotiates space with oncoming traffic.

Should one go for a walk with an adult, the experience offers excellent training in communication skills and team spirit, as well as physical fitness, because our road engineers, clearly deriving inspiration from our noble national monument, the Siq in Petra, build the pavements too narrow to accommodate two men walking abreast. What ensues is a marvellous dance where people perform intricate and imaginative manoeuvres to maintain steady progress while staying close enough to keep conversation going.

This is a marvellous concept to market Jordan among participants in the forthcoming MENA economic summit. We only need to show prospective investors how much money they stand to save in fitness club fees for their staff when they relocate to Amman.

LETTERS

Jordanians, not conference, make the difference

To the Editor:

Even with the most auspicious predictions, it is not wise to rely on any given set of yardsticks to foretell the impacts of MENA (Sunday Economic Pulse by Fahd Al Fanek, Jordan Times, Oct. 15, 1995).

We should not be deluded by the present euphoria that the rewards of MENA are around the corner, and that it is a question of time before we are inundated with the rose-petals of our expectations.

In the main, MENA's contributions can only be judged by the one criterion of "end results." Then, even the most ardent believers, along with the most frustrated defeatists, would have

to agree.

Yet we do not have to remain in waiting for a post-MENA assessment.

MENA, by definition, is an international forum about to convene in Amman with a view to recognise, at last, that Jordan has graduated from a buffer-zone between its neighbours, into a full-fledged sovereign state with established international boundaries, and is now destined to contribute to the welfare and prosperity of the region as a whole.

The Kingdom need not be held hostage to the power politics and the economic whims and dictates of others. Jordan can feel confident to plan and work towards achieving the maximum returns economic advantages for itself, to the

point, in fact, where it can elect to declare itself a free trading area without being apologetic.

The Kingdom of Jordan, a pluralistic family of ethnic and religious cultures, need not acquiesce any more to the pressures of tribalism and outdated modes of thinking.

MENA is not the end for launching Jordan on the roads to prosperity.

When everything is said and done, the international conference can contribute to the well-being of Jordan, but only if and when Jordanians are ready and willing to help themselves.

Ludwig Tamari,
Amman

Iraq pledges political reforms

(Continued from page 1)

that Baghdad had repeatedly misled U.N. monitors.

Mr. Aziz dismissed General Kamel as a spy and said no one at the United Nations should believe what he said.

"If Mr. Ekens interprets this position as a lie, then he must accept the moral responsibility for that," Mr. Aziz said.

Asked how President Saddam felt after the defection of Gen. Kamel and his brother Saddam Kamel, Mr. Aziz said he thought the president was "in a very good mood."

"I'd like to say that we all hear family, family," but we don't have a ruling family. The party is the real force behind the president and the people behind that," Mr. Aziz added.

"Members of a family might make mistakes. They might not like to stay in their country, but that doesn't change the basic situation," he said.

Mr. Aziz said Gen. Kamel betrayed his country by deceiving the U.N. Special Commission dismantling Iraq's programmes to make nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

"He was trusted and he deliberately concealed information... No one suspected he was conspiring against his leader, but he did," he added.

Mr. Aziz also said President Saddam and his elder son Uday remained on good terms, implicitly denying reports of disagreement.

"There is no tension (between them)," Mr. Aziz told the news conference in Baghdad.

The Sunday Times of London reported this week that President Saddam, angry with Uday for meddling in politics, torched a collection of 100 luxury cars which his son had accumulated.

It said President Saddam thought Uday had helped alienate Gen. Kamel.

Iraqi officials have not commented on the details of the Sunday Times report.

Mr. Aziz said Uday, president of several sports organisations, was not an important politician anyway.

"Those who have a significant political role in this country are the president, the Revolutionary Command Council, the Baath Party branches in the provinces and the ministers."

"Others are not significant and Uday Saddam Hussein is not a member in any of these bodies," he said.

On reforms, Mr. Aziz said the Revolutionary Command Council, which has ruled the country since 1968, would discuss the next steps as soon as possible.

Asked if there would be a new cabinet, he said this was up to President Saddam, who had not yet decided whether to stay on as his own prime minister or name someone

else to the post.

The Iraqi government has promised political liberalisation before but it blames the delays of the last four years on intervention by the United States and its allies and on the unusual circumstances due to the U.N. trade sanctions.

Mr. Aziz dismissed criticism of the referendum, in which President Saddam was the only candidate and in which most of the voting took place in public in full view of the supervisors.

"Every honest person felt that the people wanted to show their support for the president. They love their president and they wanted to show that to the world," he said.

"I can't comment on allegations there were irregularities. When you have irregularities, the damaged party must sue through the courts," he added.

"I believe the referendum will sadden the United States and Britain... they won't be very happy."

Asked if he envisaged a multi-candidate presidential election, he said this was the thrust of a constitutional amendment in 1991 and the referendum option adopted this time was a temporary expedient.

"We are more inclined to the idea of more than one candidate than to the idea of the referendum," he added.

Mr. Aziz said Sheikh Zayed had shown "correct attitude" when he said on Sunday that time had come for reconciliation with Iraq.

"Why do we not try to turn the page of the past and cooperate?" Sheikh Zayed said. "Saddam is one man who made a mistake but who pays the price now? More than 18 million Iraqis are subjected to famine."

"We welcome the statements of Sheikh Zayed and we thank him for that," said the Iraqi minister.

Mr. Aziz again rejected a U.N. proposal that it sell oil worth \$1 billion to pay for food and medicine and pay war reparations, all under strict U.N. supervision.

Iraq says the plan would violate Iraq sovereignty and legitimise autonomous Kurdish rule in the north, and the money left over would not be enough to relieve suffering in Iraq.

"But if the United Nations allowed us to sell oil and buy medicines and food for our people, we would accept it without any reservations. If they want transparency that this amount of money is just for that purpose, that could be arranged."

"We could buy food and medicines from the permanent members of the Security Council and they could check... because they will be the sellers and their banks will make the transactions."

"But a nation that respects its dignity and its sovereignty could not accept the present offer," he said.

Expellee children sick - U.N.

(Continued from page 1)

left the country, apart from the stranded.

Around 100 of the stranded Palestinians will be allowed to travel to the Gaza Strip under a deal struck with Israel, a Palestinian diplomat said Tuesday.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat "has reached an agreement with Israeli authorities to accept some 100 expelled Palestinians into Gaza," the diplomat, who asked to remain anonymous, told AFP. "They will go to Gaza in a week."

A Libyan diplomat said earlier on Tuesday that "Palestinians in the camp will be able to return to Libya if they want and Libyan authorities will help their return."

'Mass repatriation'

Libya meanwhile asked a U.N. sanctions committee for permission to organise air flights to repatriate more than a million Africans who it said were "illegal infiltrators."

No such mass repatriation has so far been publicly announced.

In a letter to the council committee which monitors Libyan sanctions, Libya sought permission for flights to take home some 1,067,000 "illegal infiltrators," mainly from Sudan, Chad and Mali, diplomats said.

Libya has been subjects to U.N. sanctions since 1992 for failing to hand over for trial in Britain or the United States two men indicted in the 1988 mid-air bombing of Pan Am flight 103 which exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland.

Neither the Libyan letter nor Libyan U.N. envoy Mohammad Azawi gave details of the planned repatriation and it was not known how long the alleged infiltrators had been in Libya.

Mr. Azawi said they would fly "on Libyan aircraft or United Nations aircraft," if the committee gave permission.

A committee source, estimating some 2,000 flights would be needed, said it was highly unlikely permission would be granted since the situation was not covered by any of the exceptions to sanctions.

Blast hits Paris subway train

(Continued from page 1)

along the Seine River in central Paris, across from the Louvre Museum, officials said.

Shortly after the train pulled out of the Musee d'Orsay station, "there was a huge explosion," a passenger told France 2 television.

The train stopped and the engineer told us 'don't move' at that point we were engulfed in smoke. After a few seconds we heard the first cries from the injured.

"There was nothing but smoke and the smell of gunpowder," another passenger told France-Info Radio after making his way through the tunnel with other commuters.

"I saw at least three or four people on the tracks who were gravely injured."

The subway line, a main artery used by commuters living in middle-class suburbs south and west of the French capital, hugs the Seine River.

Of the 28 hurt, at least five of them suffered serious injuries, a police spokesman said. Earlier police statements listed 11 seriously hurt.

The two most seriously injured each had a foot or leg blown off and suffered severe burns and lung damage, a spokesman for the emergency medical unit said.

Witnesses told police they saw a man of North African appearance leave the train in a big hurry just before it left the station.

Television broadcast film of a moustachioed, middle-aged man in a grey track-suit top being led, handcuffed, to a police van outside the Orsay museum. However, officials later said the man was being questioned as a witness rather than as a suspect.

Police also issued, without explanation, an alert for a dark-blue BMW with three men in it.

Investigators said the blast bore the hallmarks of the first in a series of the attacks that have struck France since July. In that incident a bomb went off in an Rer underground express train at the Saint-Michel station on July 25, killing seven people.

The investigators said bits of metal from a campaign gas canister and bolts were found among the blast debris. They said it appeared the canister

had been placed under a seat. All previous attacks, in which seven have died and more than 160 wounded, have relied on gas canisters or, in one instance, a pressure cooker, packed with explosives, nails and bolts.

The blast came just a week before President Chirac is due to meet Algerian President General Liamine Zerroual at U.N. headquarters in New York. Critics have urged Mr. Chirac to cancel the meeting to avoid appearing to endorse Gen. Zerroual in Algeria's forthcoming presidential election.

Foreign ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt insisted the scheduled meeting "has nothing to do with the presidential campaign in Algeria. It is a normal meeting between two heads of state of two important countries."

The shadowy banned Algerian Islamic Armed Group (GIA) has claimed responsibility for the wave of bombing in France.

The group has demanded that France end its six-billion-franc (\$8 million) a year aid to Algeria's military rulers. A newsletter that supports the group, Al Ansar, published by Algerian exiles in London and Stockholm, proffered fresh threats against Paris at the weekend.

Emergency workers said there was panic among the passengers as choking smoke swept through the train after the blast. Passengers had to walk along the underground railbed for about one kilometre in near-total darkness.

The head of the Muslim Institute at the Paris mosque, Dalil Boubakeur, said Tuesday he and his colleagues "once again condemn and deplore the blind violence. Islam respects human life and particularly that of innocent people."

Authorities have yet to link two other recent incidents to the bombing wave. On Monday, police arrested a man outside the Mexican embassy after he set down a gas canister equipped with a firing device.

In the other incident, a gas canister exploded inside a car set on fire in a northern suburb on Saturday and three police officers narrowly escaped injury.

World powers meet on Bosnia

(Continued from page 1)

for a second day to negotiate an exchange of prisoners of war.

The Sarajevo daily Oslohdjenje quoted Bosnian officials as saying they expected a deal to be agreed on Tuesday. However, Mr. Chizhik said the talks would continue on Wednesday.

In another promising development, the U.N. succeeded in getting a relief convoy through to the beleaguered government-held enclave of Gorazde in eastern Bosnia after Serbs had blocked the road in defiance of the ceasefire accord.

One aid convoy and two French U.N. reconnaissance patrols tried to get to Gorazde after the ceasefire came into force but were turned back by Serb forces, in one case with threats of violence.

The direct road to Gorazde, some 50 kilometres from Sarajevo, has been closed since April 1992, when the siege of the Bosnian capital began. Relief convoys have managed to get through

by an indirect route, but they have been harassed and frequently turned back by Serbs.

Under the latest ceasefire agreement the road should be open to all traffic with no prior permission required from the Serbs.

In Moscow, Mr. Ivanov, the Russian first deputy foreign minister, told reporters after Tuesday's meeting: "We raised more questions than we were able to resolve."

U.S. negotiator Richard Holbrooke, speaking of the failure to find a way around Russia's objections to its soldiers serving under a NATO command, said: "These issues are very difficult. The conversations are serious and not polemical."

"Despite the differences we had I want to say that Russian participation in the contact group has been an essential ingredient in the search for peace," he added.

The group also includes Britain, France and Germany.

A pleasant place in Iran where mixed emotions rule

By John Lancaster

ESFAHAN, Iran — The West views Iran as a land of unbridled radicalism: hostile ayatollahs, cloaked women, mobs chanting "Death to America." Here in this one-time capital of Imperial Persia, 400 kilometres south of Tehran, things look different.

Along the banks of the Zayandeh Rud river, couples stroll amid pomegranate trees and gently swaying poplars. Fountains play from the ramparts of a newly restored stone bridge. And in the 17th-century covered bazaar adjacent to Nagh-e-Jahan Square, an American visitor is besieged not by hostile stares but by rug merchants eager for his business — and questions on when and if his countrymen will return.

It is, in fact, a pleasant place. Notwithstanding Iran's many economic woes, including chronic unemployment and a doubling of prices for basic foodstuffs in the last year, Esfahan abounds with recent evidence of government largesse, including new roads and parks and a modern fertiliser plant.

Health care is reasonably sophisticated, and a burgeoning network of private, and largely secular, schools is offering an alternative to overcrowded government ones, at least for parents who can pay.

Such conspicuous improvements help explain the mixed emotions of many Iranians towards the turbulent mullahs whose revolution 16 years ago deposed the American-backed shah and gave birth to an Islamic state.

A recent three-day visit to this city of 1.1 million people revealed deep frustration with many aspects of theocratic rule, including economic mismanagement, corruption, arbitrary decision-making and sharp restrictions on personal freedom.

At the same time, there was grudging respect for the government's tangible achievements, even among Westernised elites who otherwise have little use for its radical brand of social and foreign policy.

If the popular mood of Esfahan is any guide, the Islamic revolution continues to enjoy considerable support — and may prove to be a more enduring phenomenon than many in the West would think. The United States, which accuses Iran of sponsoring terrorism and secretly trying to develop nuclear weapons, banned U.S. trade with Iran this year. Iran denies both charges.

"If you ask me, during this 16 years, what has been done in this country, there are many good things," said a well-to-do physician who is to particular fan of Islamic rule. "The country has become more self-sufficient, more confident, more self-respecting."

Esfahan is hardly immune to the economic troubles that plague the rest of the country. These are felt most sharply by salaried workers such as civil servants, whose wages have lagged far behind inflation even as the government trims subsidies for food and other essentials. Many see no alternative but to take a second job.

Frustration with government economic policy runs high among the merchant class here.

But for all their complaints about economic mismanagement, many Esfahanis appreciate the public development efforts of the last few years. Such efforts reflect the ambition of President Hashemi Rafsanjani to win popular support for the government after the privations visited on Iranians during their costly eight-year war with Iraq in the 1980s.

At least in Esfahan, the government's strategy has yielded striking results. The city is bursting with new parks and landscaping, the river has been cleaned up and a recycling programme has been instituted.

Other improvements include a beltway, now 30 per cent complete, as well as new power-generating capacity, which



has all but eliminated power outages.

Health care suffered after the fall of the shah, as many Western-trained physicians fled the country. But those who stayed in Esfahan say the community is reasonably well served by 10 public hospitals, several equipped with modern diagnostic instruments.

Schools are one area where the government has conspicuously failed to keep pace with needs. Because of overcrowding, public schools typically operate in two daily shifts, and even then classrooms often have as many as 50 pupils, teachers said.

The government has dealt with the shortage of schools in part by permitting the opening of "non-profit" — meaning private — schools over the last several years. One, situated in an old villa on a busy street, has classes of no more than 25 students, a relatively well-equipped lab and training on personal computers.

"We are just like an American school," said the principal, boasting that the school devotes just two hours a week to religious instruction.

The qualitative improvements have won the government grudging admiration from Western-trained professionals who otherwise chafe at the idea of theocratic rule.

But one continuing sore point among many educated Iranians is the mullahs' restrictive social policies, embodied in the parliament's recent decision to ban use of satellite dishes, which officials see as a source of Western cultural pollution. The decision further limited an already narrow range of entertainment options.

"The biggest failure of the Islamic republic is the failure to create fun," an academic said.

Even something as innocent as renting a pedal boat comes under the scrutiny of government authorities. Police keep a close watch on the operation to make sure the boats are not rented to unmarried couples.

"Their behaviour tells us, their faces," said an officer. "If we find out they're not related, we'll send them to the local authorities. They will call upon their parents and advise them."

Added another police officer, "I consider all women in this country to be part of my own family, so we have to protect them."

Similarly, there are signs of a conservative backlash at Esfahan University, where school authorities recently ordered that women must sit in the back of classrooms.

The Washington Post

Why change perfection?

By Jenny Goodman

"OH PLEASE God, let it be a girl!" cries the pregnant Jewish woman. Not that she dislikes baby boys. Her cry simply means she is dreading the moment when she will have to hand over her son for ritual circumcision.

The fierce controversy it has already provoked among the communities that practise male circumcision goes beyond the question: does it hurt? Prised by Jews, Muslims, Africans and Australian Aborigines, male circumcision raises further, more profound questions about cultural and religious identity and group bonding, survival and historical continuity.

The answer to the question, "does it hurt?" is yes. A lot — even though "minor discomfort," no worse than having fingernails cut, "babies also cry when you change their nappies" and "they forget about it the minute it's over" are the usual defences. Biological facts speak for themselves, however. The inner lining of the foreskin constitutes one third of the most erogenous tissue of the penis, and has a greater concentration of fully developed nerve endings even than the glands. Yet circumcision without anaesthetic continues to be performed.

Can we justify doing surgery on a healthy baby? Non-Orthodox Jews, such as Victor Schonfeld, the film maker, would suggest not. But there are not frightening echoes of racism in challenging a practice sacred to religious and ethnic minorities? In the Jewish community, an issue once utterly taboo is now being debated; it is the women who are breaking the silence.

Twenty of us sit in a circle on uncomfortable wooden chairs. Our ages range from 20 to 60, and we are attending a discussion session on circumcision — the first of its kind — at a Jewish women's conference. Judy speaks first: "I'm so glad to be here because I've never even talked about this before — I thought I was the only one who worried about it." So did we all. One by one, the stories pour out.

Rebecca is a grandmother, but she has never forgotten the day her son David was circumcised. "It's etched on my memory. It's supposed to be a day of celebration, but for me it was an awful day. I really felt I was betraying David, and yet I couldn't have said no. Everyone told me to relax, it would all be over in a flash. I wasn't there when the mohel (ritual circumciser) actually did it, of course, but when they gave him back to me he was still screaming. The nappies were blood-stained for days, and it seemed to hurt him a lot when he peed."

She pauses, and looks around at some younger faces. "In those days we didn't question tradition. We went along with it; we didn't think we had a choice."

As a Jew, I took Bris Milah (Covenant of Circumcision) for granted, and attended many such ceremonial operations when a son was born to friends or family. And as a medical student and young doctor, I considered myself less squeamish and more detached than average, so I watched the procedure. I watched it carefully; the forcible tearing of the foreskin from the head of the penis (to which is it attached in early childhood), and cutting off of the foreskin with a scalpel or knife. I watched the baby's face contort, I saw the little limbs that could not even flail, as they went ahead with the operation.

"The parental pressure is unbelievable," says Hannah, another of the women. "My parents aren't especially religious, nor are my husband's, but if we hadn't done it they would have been heartbroken."

This cultural pressure mediated through the family, this burden of history, is as hindering, psychologically, as the Orthodox rabbi's sense of being commanded by God.

"Do you realise," asked one rabbi, "that our persecutors, from the Romans to the Nazis, have tried to stop us circumcising our children? That's how they've always tried to destroy our faith. In Soviet Russia and throughout our exile we have risked our lives to carry out this commandment. Often we have died for it. So important is it that even in the cattle cars on the way to Auschwitz..." he shudders. So do I. "Even there, parents would carry out this command for the honour of the Holy One. And you — you want us to stop doing it?"

Circumcision has become, in the collective Jewish psyche, a symbol of the defiant survival of a beleaguered people.

Questioning it, as Jewish women are now doing, arouses deep fears of anti-Semitism, fears which are not groundless. But if dissent is stifled, then space is created for racists to determine the agenda. Both Judaism and Islam teach that the human being is created in the image of the Divine, and so — one could argue — needs no correction by human hands. Judaism forbids causing pain or harm to fellow creatures, and even forbids body-piercing and tattooing as damaging. Neither male nor female circumcision is mandated in the Koran.

Sarah is the one woman in the room who has not yet spoken. She is seven months pregnant. She is carrying a boy. Rebecca turns to her: "We think it makes us unique, doing circumcision. But it doesn't. Muslims and other peoples do it. And it's thousands of years older even than Judaism. When we say it's so essential to Jewish identity, we actually mean male Jewish identity. We Jewish women have kept our identity alive without altering our bodies."

The Independent

Private sector on multi-pronged approach to develop transport base

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As expectations are high that Jordan is on its way to becoming a major regional hub for trade, the Kingdom's transport operators have drawn up a moderately ambitious list of private sector projects that involve the purchase of sea-going bulk carriers and expansion of facilities at Aqaba port as well as intense training for Jordanians in handling transport-related issues.

The projects, totaling worth \$143 million, do not necessarily include proposals which are discussions between private sector partners in Jordan and abroad, but represent the work of the private sector committee charged with drawing up projects for the Oct. 29-31 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit.

The private sector projects are distinctly different from the proposals to be submitted by the Jordanian government at the summit in that they represent commercial ventures while the government proposals — estimated to cost more than \$400 million — are related to infrastructure like roads and railways and expansion of the Aqaba port itself.

Sufian Muheisen, rapporteur of the private sector committee, said there was strong conviction among Jordanian businessmen that the Kingdom's potential as a key transit route for regional trade as well as for the center for industrial produc-



Sufian Muheisen



Ibrahim Faouri

tion could be and would be realized as peace takes hold. "As such, we have to be ready and prepared," Mr. Muheisen, general manager of the Jordan Shipping Agents Association, told the Jordan Times.

The project proposals prepared by the private sector include a plan to set up a \$38 million transport company which will have a large fleet of vehicles designed to accommodate all types of cargo, including containers as well as "specialized" goods such as chemicals.

The second project is a maritime transport company, with a capital of \$70 million, which will acquire bulk carriers for Jordan's major exports — phosphates and potash as well as other extracted minerals from the Dead Sea.

Another proposal is for the establishment of a bunkering station for ships — "a sort of gas station" — in the Gulf of Aqaba, said Mr. Muheisen.

The estimated cost of the project is \$5.1 million.

With the expected rise in the number of ships docking at Aqaba, the proposed bunkering station is one of the essential facilities that Jordan should offer at its sole outlet to the sea, said Ibrahim Faouri, a member of the board of directors of the Jordan Shipping Agents Association.

Mr. Muheisen noted that such a bunkering facility station would effectively "complement" the proposed \$1 billion refinery at Aqaba.

Two other proposals, again described as very important by the shipping sector, is a major workshop for ship repairs at a cost of \$1.2 million and a \$0.75 million institute to train Jordanians in shipping-related areas.

Other projects handled by the private sector committee include Royal Jordanian (RJ), proposals to expand its maintenance centre at the Queen Alia International

Airport and other aviation-related facilities and training at a cost of \$11.2 million.

Mr. Faouri said the private sector projects were not simply enough to cope with the expected rise in regional trade involving Jordan.

First of all, he said, Jordan should have an "inland terminal" that will serve as the focal point for transit cargo as well as Jordanian exports.

Another project with a high feasibility, according to Mr. Faouri, is a dry dock.

"It is time we gave very serious thought to building a dry dock in the Gulf of Aqaba," said Mr. Faouri. The nearest dry dock in the area is in Bahrain in the Arabian Gulf. Mr. Faouri conceded that the idea needs close feasibility studies but said he was convinced that it would turn out to be an excellent project, given the expected rise in number of ships calling at Aqaba as well as the neighbouring Eilat port of Israel.

In general, Mr. Faouri called for setting a "five-year" target for the completion of the private sector transport projects parallel to the government-proposed projects related to infrastructure and railways.

"If we set a five-year target, then we would be able to complete the projects in seven years," said Mr. Faouri. The completion of the projects, he added, also means that Jordan will be in a much better position to cope with the expected demand and pressure it would face by then.

Arab Gulf states propose 141 projects with EU

MUSCAT (AFP) — Arab Gulf states Tuesday proposed 141 projects in petrochemicals and other sectors to be carried out jointly with the European Union (EU) in a drive to diversify their oil-reliant economies.

The Doha-based Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consulting (GOIC) presented the list at a key economic conference attended by more than 400 officials and businessmen from the EU and the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The projects include 63 gas ventures covering petrochemicals, fertilisers, plastics and other products. They also include 24 enterprises in engineering, 19 in metals, 12 in food, 10 in mining and quarrying and five in paper.

GOIC secretary general, Abdul Rahman Al Jaafari, did not give the value but industries such as chemicals need large investment. "Joint ventures in export projects are seen as an excellent way to accelerate both the creation and the sharing of

wealth. The EU and the GCC have in place a number of facilities and programmes which can be more fully utilised to boost joint venture project implementation," Mr. Jaafari said in a study. "We consider that the timing is now right for the implementation of many GCC projects including many export-oriented industrial ventures," he added.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — have stepped up a campaign to acquire industrial technology to diversify their economies and offset a sharp decline in oil prices.

The conference in Muscat is the third attempt by GCC nations to persuade their main economic partner, the EU, to invest in their region to benefit from economic reforms, cheap labour and abundant energy.

Most of the GCC's industrial investment of about \$40 billion has been pumped into light products, which have

had little impact on their income and the structure of the gross domestic product (GDP).

Official figures showed light industry has remained as low as seven per cent of the GDP compared with more than 30 per cent for the oil and gas sector.

Mr. Jaafari, whose organisation advises on GCC industrial policies, said vast investment opportunities existed in the Gulf gas sector as it is still largely untapped. While GCC states control more than 15 per cent of the world's gas, their output does not exceed one per cent, he added.

In his paper, he said the decline in oil prices and higher EU exports to the region has created a balance of payment surplus of around \$14 billion in 1994 in favour of the Europeans.

But he added: "The trade and services imbalance should be seen as an opportunity, not a threat, to the deepening of EU-GCC economic relations."

Forecast says troubles loom for booming Asia-Pacific region

BEIJING (AP) — Financial troubles in Japan, inflation in China and isolationism in the United States could cut short a period of sustained prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region, according to an economic forecast.

Economies in the Asia-Pacific region largely succeeded this year in bringing growth down to healthy, sustainable levels and in keeping control over inflation, the Pacific Economic Outlook 1995-1997 said.

The forecast is prepared by economists under the sponsorship of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, a non-governmental organisation whose members include 22 countries or regions.

It forecasts average growth in the Asia-Pacific of 5.6 per cent this year and 4.2 per cent next year. Actual growth averaged 4.6 per cent in 1994.

But if the United States and Japan, which experienced slow or little growth, are excluded, the average growth rate for the region would be 5.9 per cent this year, according to the forecast.

Inflation for 1995 is projected at 4.2 per cent, slightly higher than last year. Tight monetary policies, excess industrial capacity and more liberal trading rules helped keep inflation in check, the Outlook report said.

But inflation remains a concern in several countries, especially China, where consumer prices rose 24 per cent

last year. The rate this year should be about 17 per cent due to government credit-tightening and other policies, said Lawrence Krause, an economist at the University of California-San Diego, who headed the forecasting team.

He fears initial success will fuel calls for easier credit and lead the Chinese government to relax tight monetary controls, as has happened during previous high-inflation periods.

Continuing troubles in Japan's financial sector also could have serious repercussions for the region, he said.

Moroccan economy needs urgent reform, World Bank report says

RABAT (R) — Morocco needs urgent economic reform to compete on world markets, the World Bank said in a report made public Monday.

"Morocco risks being marginalised in the competition for world markets and could be exposed to worsening social and economic distortions," the report said.

"Macro-economic stabilisation is an urgent priority... Morocco's objectives should be ambitious, difficult decisions should be made to restructure the education system... to sustain and adapt reforms in the medium and long-term period," it said.

It said unemployment had reached 16 per cent of

Morocco's 10-million workforce in 1994. A high percentage was registered among university graduates.

Extracts of the report were released in French by King Hassan who had received it two weeks ago. He said in a nationwide televised speech Friday that he had asked the World Bank "to fairly examine" Morocco's economy.

"Morocco can be an efficient competitor regarding its human resources, on the basis of high productivity, and a dynamic overture on foreign markets, both indispensable to the reduction of unemployment and poverty," the report said.

It said Morocco's social indicators were far below simi-

lar countries and human resources had not adapted to a strategy of strong growth. Also the disparity between urban and rural areas had increased.

It said between 1988 and 1994, gross domestic product (GDP) rose by an annual average of 4.3 per cent which represents "a real improvement of the Moroccan population's living standards but still depends on fluctuations of agricultural output."

Morocco's economy was under pressure in 1995 due to severe drought described by the authorities as "the drought of the century." The country had to double its cereals imports.

The report said Morocco

had made important progress in sectors as privatisation, financial and taxation but it was "not sufficient" to promote rapid growth.

"Growth was too weak to absorb a growing active population," the bank said.



Peanuts



Andy Cap



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword by Chuck Deodene

ACROSS
1 Damage
5 Sphagnum, e.g.
9 Hard evidence
14 Medley
15 — She Sweet?
16 Newswoman
17 Elmer
18 Missile shelter
19 Skeet target
20 S&L employee
22 Snow — (Oriental treat)
23 Neighbor of Uru.
24 Asian inland sea
26 Noted poet's monogram
28 Hawthorne work
34 Vigoda of "Fish"
36 Corundum
37 Albacore
38 Flop
40 Aussie bird
41 Sharp pain
42 Twine
43 Author Loos
45 Literary monogram
46 Rock group
50 Pop
51 Capt. Hook's aide
52 Fashionable resort
55 Terza — (verse form)
58 Freak
62 Toothless threat
65 Quayle's successor
66 Kicking's partner
67 Attract
68 Lal abbr.
69 Kidney-related
70 Dense metal
71 Freeway exit

DOWN
2 Large number
3 Come home in — (Pound)
4 Cash
5 Decorative
6 Crankhouse lull
7 Ginger cookie
8 Eye sore, var.
9 Crinkly labric
10 Eighteen wheeler
11 Draft rating
12 Stench
13 Tooth
19 In a perfect way
21 Prior, in poetry
25 Bewail
27 News
28 Musical pace
29 Enclose
31 Cowboy Gene
32 Single
33 Seizes
34 Outpost
35 Un-manned
39 Flex
43 IRS grilling
44 Like tanks
47 Firearm part
48 Gave
49 Account book
52 Train Tyson, in a way
53 Blanch
54 Neat as —
56 Rumor's source?
57 Cantain lever
59 Scintilla
60 Mine car
61 Bark
63 Braun of the Reich
64 Bullpen stat

Yesterday's puzzle solved:

SELF CRAPS TREK
HAIR HELL OUT HEMI
ORNE ABELIST RIOT
OPENHOUSE PLANT
LEIFTY EAST ELISE
ALAI ORALES WIEO
WATCHPOCKETIVE TO
NNE OUSTED IRON
STAIR BASSO SCENE
COLD FRONT MONEY
WALL ROBOT ROILE
BEETLE AT TIME IRMA
TATER AMOR

Kantor sets free trade deal with Palestinians

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor said Tuesday the United States had completed a free trade deal with the Palestinians.

"We have finalized an exchange of letters that will give free trade status to the West Bank and Gaza Strip," Mr. Kantor told a news conference at Israel's industry and trade ministry.

According to the letters, between Washington, Israel and the Palestinian self-rule authority, the United States will not charge customs duties on any Palestinian exports from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Kantor said the move was meant to reaffirm Washington's commitment to strengthening the peace process.

Up until now the Palestinians came under the General System of Preference (GSP). "This takes us further than the GSP," which only allowed certain products to be shipped to the United States free of customs.

"The free trade agreement will provide economic and security benefits," Mr. Kantor said. It will create more jobs for Palestinians and propel the creation of industrial zones.

In the letters exchanged, the Palestinian Authority committed itself to working towards the lifting of a boycott against Israel by the Arab World, Mr. Kantor said.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Astrological Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Study your plans and get them down to a working level during the daytime today, but avoid disagreeing over finances in the evening.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Privately seek ways to advance during the daytime, today but don't try to force anything in the evening or there could be disastrous results.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be clever and advance more quickly within your company at this time, also follow advice provided by a good and trusted advisor.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Plan how to improve your abilities towards being successful during the day today and in the evening show you are not greedy.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Plan just how to enlarge your vistas, especially in the business world where you will be noticed by higher-ups, but tonight avoid the limelight.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Follow your hunches during the daytime today, particularly with new interests, but tonight rely only on your mature judgement to see you through any situation.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be with those who accomplish much and make progress towards great success today. Be sure to carry through with little promises you have made.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Clarify your position where your career activities are concerned and you can produce more, thereby being recognised by those in charge. Take any needed health treatments.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Plan to take in the amusements which can please you and make your life more rewarding in the company of congenial friends and your loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get your home beautified and add new pieces of furniture during the daytime today, but avoid the temper of an irate fellow associate who could cause difficulties.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You can come to fine agreements with associates during the daytime, but be very careful in motion while on the highway in the evening.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You must complete those monetary arrangements you started previously in the morning today, then after lunch be with partners later tonight.

Birthingstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

Kantor sets free trade deal with Palestinians

UNITED JERUSALEM (AP) — U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor said today he had completed a free trade deal with the Palestinians. "We have finalized an exchange of letters that will give the Palestinians a free trade area with the West Bank and Gaza Strip," Kantor told a news conference at Israel's Ministry of Trade and Industry.

According to the letters, the U.S. will grant the Palestinians a free trade area with the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The U.S. will also grant the Palestinians a free trade area with the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The U.S. will also grant the Palestinians a free trade area with the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Wheat prices hit 15-year highs

LONDON (R) — Wheat prices traded around their highest in 15 years in Chicago Monday amid reports that buyers were queuing for U.S. grain against a backdrop of dwindled world stocks.

Reports that Tunisia, Pakistan, Morocco and Lebanon soon will tender or already are in the market for U.S. wheat boosted prices, traders said.

Chicago Board of Trade March wheat futures were up almost 10 cents at \$5.03 per bushel, highest for the second month contract since 1980.

World stocks of wheat are down to their lowest in 20 years after drought in Australia and North Africa cut harvests there. Russian crops also down.

The latest surge in wheat prices coincided with a 50th anniversary meeting in Quebec City of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf told 153 agricultural ministers at the weekend to give more in Third World food aid after years of cutbacks.

And Lester Brown, president of Washington-based Worldwatch Institute Inc., told the gathering: "The politics of surplus will be replaced by the politics of scarcity."

"The real threat in the future will not be military aggression but food security," he said.

Meanwhile, the European Union (EU) might tax exports of grain to ensure that adequate supplies are available for consumption in the 15 member states, Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler has said.

Figures provided by member states showed that the EU grain harvest this year was likely to amount to 175 million tonnes and that producers were holding their harvest in private stocks in the expectation that prices would rise.

Prices within the EU are aligned with prices on world markets but many countries which produce grain in competition with the EU are expected to have poor harvests. This is expected to increase demand for EU grain on export markets.

Mr. Fischler did not rule out the possibility that exports of grain might be taxed "if prices continue to rise" in order to ensure that adequate supplies were available for the home market.

The European Union has already suspended the payment of export subsidies and so-called "grain mountains" of surplus grain held for years in EU intervention stocks have been reduced to relatively insignificant amounts.

But Mr. Fischler also said that the commission might provide financial help to farmers whose crops have been

hit by drought or unusual weather.

The commission might take 300 million ECUs (\$378 million) from reserves of 1.5 billion ECUs available under the structural fund for backward regions, he told journalists.

"Part of the reserves could be used for structural measures to help farmers who are victims of changes in the climate," he said.

If EU ministers gave their approval, 150 million ECUs could be made available to farmers whose crops had been hit by drought. Several of the 15 members of the union, and notably Spain, have suffered from drought this year.

Until now, any suggestion that the EU should provide help to farmers suffering from drought or floods has been rejected by a majority of members on the basis that such aid is a matter for national governments under the policy of subsidiarity which places power to solve a problem as close as possible to the source, at regional, then national and finally EU level.

U.N. staff: Contacts, government support dominate job promotions

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — As the United Nations faces accusations of inefficiency, a U.N. survey released Monday showed that U.N. workers believe promotions at the organisation are based on contacts and not qualifications.

In a survey of 4,252 U.N. employees around the globe, 70 per cent said U.N. recruiting does not attract "staff possessing the highest level of integrity and competence."

"As it now stands, the recruitment procedure is felt by some to be a joke," the survey said.

About a quarter of those responding said hiring was due to political pressure while another 25 per cent cited nepotism.

The survey comes as the United Nations faces a financial crunch with members calling for cuts in the \$1.1 billion U.N. budget and staff reductions. The United States has repeatedly demanded that the United Nations slash its bloated bureaucracy and streamline agencies.

The survey was presented to Secretary-General Boutros Ghali on Friday.

Sixty-six per cent of respondents said the main factor behind promotion was "friends higher up" while 26 per cent said the primary reason was government backing. Only 20 per cent cited competence as a dominant factor.

Denis Halliday, assistant secretary-general for human resources management, demoted that hiring was political, but added that "too many of the staff are not satisfied that they are making a difference."

"Management needs to come up with some devices to respond to career ambitions with the staff," he said.

Nearly half the staff members included suggestions for changing the U.N. in their questionnaires.

"Less bureaucracy, more fantasy," one staffer wrote.

One respondent said the organisation should "employ real professionals, not despoils and misfits."

Staff members generally said they wanted more qualified managers, greater accountability and additional personal responsibility.

"The U.N. should not be a ship with several decks, where some get sun-tanned and others work," one staffer wrote.

Greater job mobility and openness to criticism from within would also increase morale, some staff members wrote.

Two out of three staffers cited U.N. bureaucracy as its weak point, while one-third said the control exerted by powerful states was its drawback.

The survey was conducted by a group of U.N. staffers in Geneva. The questionnaires were sent to 20,000 staff members across the world. About 20 per cent were answered.

The U.N. and its related agencies have a total of 53,000 employees.

BUSINESS DIRT & BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

JD 20 banknote

THE SECOND issue of the JD 20 banknote carrying the brown and blue colours will cease to be legal tender as of May 1, 1996 after the Council of Ministers approved a recommendation from the Development Council to withdraw the bill from circulation. The governor of the Central Bank had recommended to the Cabinet last August the withdrawal of the banknote from circulation (Al Aswaq).

1,750 persons to attend summit

ABOUT 1,750 participants from the Jordanian, Arab and foreign private and public sectors will take part in the Amman economic summit, according to sources at the operations room at the Amman Financial Market. The sources said this number was almost final as 900 businessmen and 300 officials will take part in the summit in addition to about 550 local participants (350 from the private sector and 200 from the public sector). The number of journalists covering the summit will be about 400, the sources added (Al Ra'i).

No holiday

INFORMED SOURCES said there is no intention until now to issue an announcement to close government institutions and departments during the Amman Oct. 29-31 economic summit (Al Ra'i).

Privatisation of bus corporation

A FOREIGN company has completed a reevaluation of the assets and liabilities of the Public Transport Corporation (PTC) as a first step towards converting it into a private sector entity. PTC Director-General Marwan Khitan said the government was considering its options to implement the change. Mr. Khitan added that the foreign consultant firm, under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport, will complete the studies on privatising the PTC and organising the transport sector in a few months. The PTC head said the corporation has offered some of its routes for investors from the private sector although that was not the best solution to the transport problem. He noted that the government was forced into that move under an emergency situation resulting from the return of 400,000 expatriates after the Gulf crisis, but still, the private sector companies contributed, in some form or another, to contain the pressure on the public transport situation. Mr. Khitan said a suitable formula was being sought to unify the operations of these private companies (investors) within the efforts being made to organise the public transport sector. The PTC has a fleet of 240 buses, 140 of which are running (Al Ra'i).

Arbitrary firings

THE ASSOCIATION of General Services and Entrepreneurs is demanding a halt to arbitrary firings after tens of workers were dismissed by five hotels and restaurants. The association head, Basima Orani, said the dismissals occurred few days ago and that the Jordan Hotels and Tourism Company took the decision on the strength of article 6 in the labour law which authorises the termination of services for reorganisation purposes. Ms. Orani said those who approached the association for support included one who worked at a hotel and eight at a restaurant. She demanded that they be reinstated in their jobs (Al Ra'i).

Licensing fees

THE DIRECTORATE of Licensing Drivers and Vehicles collected JD 24.8 million in fees during the first eight months of this year. The directorate collected JD 33.4 million during the whole of 1994. The Amman region accounted for 70 per cent of the directorate's operations (Al Aswaq).

Financial Markets

in co-operation with
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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close	Tokyo Close
Starting Pound	1.5744	1.5715
Deutsche Mark	1.4240	1.4225
Swiss Franc	1.1545	1.1525
French Franc	4.9645	4.9655
Japanese Yen	100.63	100.50
European Currency Unit	1.9355	1.9335

Interbank Interest Rates

1 MTH 3 MTHS 6 MTHS 12 MTHS

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.56	5.61	5.56	5.56
Starting Pound	6.50	6.56	6.56	6.62
Deutsche Mark	5.61	5.67	5.61	5.67
Swiss Franc	2.00	2.06	2.06	2.06
French Franc	5.41	5.43	5.42	5.43
Japanese Yen	0.11	0.06	0.06	0.06
European Currency Unit	5.56	5.56	5.53	5.56

Exchange Rates

1 USD = 1 J.D. = 1000

Gold	USD/100	J.D./100	Silver	USD/100	J.D./100
Gold	515.40	7.50	Silver	5.37	0.100

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

17/10/1995

Currency	100 J.D.	100 J.D.
U.S. Dollar	0.7180	0.7140
Starting Pound	1.1194	1.1150
Deutsche Mark	0.5000	0.5015
Swiss Franc	0.4165	0.4196
French Franc	0.1484	0.1441
Japanese Yen	0.0079	0.0071
Dutch Guilder	0.4467	0.4489
Swedish Krona	0.0444	0.0446
Italian Lira	0.0444	0.0446
Belgian Franc	0.0444	0.0446

Saudis to invest \$2.9b in power projects

MANAMA (R) — Saudi Arabia will invest 10.8 billion riyals (\$2.9 billion) in new power projects over the next six years to meet growing demand for electricity, a Saudi newspaper said.

The industry and electricity ministry plans to carry out big power projects in the next six years in various parts of the kingdom worth 10.8 billion riyals, the daily Al Riyadh said.

It quoted a ministry official, Abdullah Bin Abdul Rahman Al Taban, as saying the finance for the projects would come from an increase in electricity rates introduced in January when the kingdom issued its 1995 budget.

Diplomats expect the higher rates to generate an extra \$400 to \$500 million in 1995.

The newspaper said 6.3 billion riyals (\$1.7 billion) would be spent on building a 1,200 megawatt plant and a substation for Saudi Consolidated Electric Company (SCECO) — Central.

It said 2.4 billion riyals (\$650 million) would be used to build a 600-megawatt plant for SCECO — West.

SCECO — South would get 1.09 billion riyals (\$290 million) to boost power network and 358 million riyals (\$95.5 million) would be invested in the northern region, it added.

The kingdom currently produces around 17,500 megawatts from gas turbine, steam, and water desalination plants.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3370/80 1.4208/18 1.5906/16 1.1512/22 29.21/25 4.9667/17 1607.1/8.6 100.42/52 6.9480/80 6.2530/80 5.5075/75 1.4246/56 0.7578/83 7.7311/21	Canadian dollar Deutschemarks Dutch guilders Swiss francs Belgian francs French francs Italian lire Japanese yen Swedish crowns Norwegian crowns Danish crowns Singapore dollars Australian dollars Hong Kong dollars
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One sterling	\$1.5718/28
One ounce of gold	\$383.80/384.30

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Tomba threatens World Cup protests

ROME (R) — Italian superstar Alberto Tomba has threatened to skip some World Cup races and compete in only the first leg of other Alpine Skiing slaloms this season if the sport's ruling body introduces proposed changes.

"I hope the international federation has a rethink about this business," the boisterous overall World Cup champion commented at an award ceremony in northern Italy.

"If it doesn't then I too might introduce some novelties, decide where to race and maybe only take part in the first legs, the only part left of the real race," he said.

The Alpine Committee of the International Ski Federation (FIS) said last week in Interlaken, Switzerland, it would propose new rules to the FIS Council for the starting order of the second leg of World Cup slalom races.

At present the first 15 after the first leg compete in reverse order in the second, with the winner decided before the rest of the field has completed the race.

The FIS Alpine Committee suggested that the second leg starting order should be extended to the first 30 in reverse order when snow conditions allowed.

The proposal is expected to be approved when the FIS Council meets in Oberhofen, Switzerland, in the first week of November.

Many racers are against the proposal, designed to make slaloms more interesting for spectators and ensure the competition is only over when the last athlete has finished.

Under the changes, World Cup race juries will have to specify one hour before the start of the first leg whether to run the second with the first 15 or 30 in reverse order.

"If they had enough people they could run the first 50 in reverse order," said triple Olympic champion Tomba, who won his first overall World Cup title last season as well as the slalom and giant slalom titles.

"If they did that then we might as well run the second leg in a bobsleigh. It's just not on," grumbled Tomba, who won 11 of his 16 World Cup races last season. "The races will be perverted, the best racers penalised."

Women's Olympic gold medalist Deborah Compagnoni agreed with Tomba's assessment.

"It's a backward step," she said. "You'll never find pistes that will hold for 30 runs."



Alberto Tomba

No teamwork in 1996 race

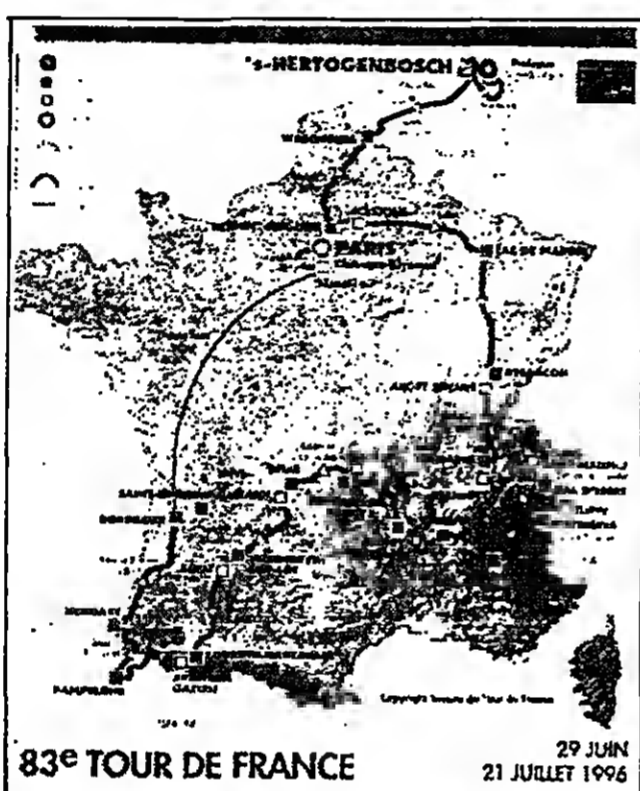
PARIS (AFP) — Next year's Tour de France will do away with a team time-trial for the first time since 1975 and throws down the daunting challenge of a 30 km individual time-trial in the Alps.

The 198 riders in 22 teams will have two days fewer than this year before they leave the rolling plains of northern France and hit the mountains.

The seventh stage will see them tackle the 2,000m climb up to Les Arcs, followed the next day by a 30km time-trial to Val d'Isere.

The biggest climb is a 2,640m mountain pass on the way to the Italian skiing resort of Sestriere and the four days they spend in the Alps could decide if Miguel Indurain wins a sixth consecutive tour.

The 83rd tour starts at the Dutch town of s'Herengobosch on June 29 and crosses into four neighbouring countries — Holland, Belgium, Italy and Spain — in a 3,835km clockwise loop around France which misses out the Mediterranean region.



83rd TOUR DE FRANCE

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Xerox launch X3006

"THE DOCUMENT COMPANY" Xerox, one of the region's leading providers of office equipment launched the multi-functional Xerox 3006 in the Middle East. The Xerox 3006 combines a plain paper fax, a PC printer and a convenient copier in a single, desk top unit. Also available is an optional PC fax and scanning facility to increase the functionality of the Xerox 3006. This is the first multi-functional office product from Xerox.

At the heart of the Xerox 3006 is a full featured, plain paper fax, transmitting at a speed of six seconds per page. Its high capacity memory enables multiple jobs to be stored for delayed sending. There are no limitations on the number of outgoing faxes and it can handle up to 50 pages of incoming faxes per day. As a PC printer the Xerox 3006 supports both DOS and Windows applications. The advanced ink-jet technology provides high quality 300 dot per inch printing at three pages per minute.

The Xerox 3006 is also a convenient copier. It can enlarge or reduce documents from 50 to 200 per cent as well as collate copied documents. At the launching of the Xerox 3006, Omar Sabbah, general manager, Arabian Office Automation WLL, the Xerox distributor in Jordan said: "We see the future of the small office/home office in multi-functional equipment. The Xerox 3006 is the first multi-functional product that Xerox has launched in this market."



Vinnie Jones (right) of Wimbledon oot-jumps Marc Rieper of West Ham for the ball during the two sides Premier League game. The final score was a 1-0 win for West Ham (Reuters photo)

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Ravanelli fit to face Rangers

LONDON (R) — Juventus welcome top striker Fabrizio Ravanelli back from injury as they seek to extend their victorious run in the European Cup Champions' League against Glasgow Rangers on Wednesday.

Ravanelli and fellow international striker Gianluca Vialli were both substituted because of muscle injuries on Sunday when Juventus suffered their first defeat of the Italian league season in a 2-1 loss against current leaders AC Milan.

But the 1985 European champions received a boost when Ravanelli was passed fit after an ultra-scan test on Monday, although captain Vialli and reserve striker Michele Padovano were both ruled out of the match in Turin against Rangers.

Ravanelli lines up for the Group C clash with Alessandro del Piero and Angelo di Livio in a three-man attack which showed its menace in the last Champions' League encounter against Steaua Bucharest when all three scored in a 3-0 home win.

Vialli has been ruled out for at least 10 more days but Juventus should be lifted by the influence of del Piero, who has enjoyed inspirational form in the Champions' League and was also among the scorers in the opening 3-1 win away to Germany's Borussia Dortmund.

Juventus coach Marcello Lippi, reviewing his injury problems, said: "Not all of them are 100 per cent and I have few choices in replacing them, which doesn't help."

He was annoyed by the first-half showing against Rangers, but heartened by a spirited comeback after the interval. "I spoke to the players and one impressive thing emerged none of them felt inferior to Milan because they had lost on Sunday," he said.

Scottish champions Rangers, struggling to stay in contention after defeat by Steaua and a draw with Dortmund, appear to have bigger worries with six absences. Five are injured, including England international Paul Gascoigne and Danish forward Brian Laudrup, while Scotland defender Alan McLaren is suspended.

But they are reinforced by the return of strikers Ally McCoist and Oleg Salenko, the Russian who scored a record five goals in a World Cup match against Cameroon last year.

Like Juventus, title-holders Ajax Amsterdam and Russian champions Spartak Moscow defend 100 per cent records.

Ajax, who have not con-

ceded a goal in winning all their nine Dutch league matches this season, should overwhelm Grasshopper Zurich, who were beaten 3-0 by Hungary's Ferencvaros and 2-0 by Real Madrid in their previous Champions' League Group D games.

They are without injured Brazilian defender Marcio Santos but do not expect slight injuries will deprive them of Marc Overmars, scorer in their 1-0 win over Real, and Finn Jari Litmanen, who hit a hat-trick in a 5-1 drubbing of Ferencvaros.

Group B pace-setters Spartak take on Rosengorg in Norway with confidence high after victories over England's Blackburn Rovers and Poland's Legia Warsaw, international striker Sergei Yuran scoring in both.

"The team is in excellent form," Spartak coach Georgy Yartsev said. "We are not going to make life easy for the Norwegians. We will play our game and fight to the end."

Spartak, however, would be unwise to underestimate the Norwegian league leaders, 2-1 winners over expensively assembled Blackburn.

The English champions flew to Warsaw for their match against Legia without England winger Stuart Ripley, so the player could be with his wife who was taken to hospital on Tuesday because of a pregnancy complication.

In Group A, unbeaten Porto take on Greek club Panathinaikos in buoyant mood after crushing Braga 3-0 on Saturday in one of their best performances of the season to make it a year since they tasted defeat in the Portuguese league.

Juan Ramon Rocha, Argentine coach of Panathinaikos, regards Porto as favourites and sees the clash as nothing less than "a rendezvous with history."

"If we win, our names will be written with golden letters in soccer history," he said. "We will attack from the start."

Much will depend on Polish striker Krzysztof Warzycha, scorer of two goals in the Greek champions' 3-1 win over Nantes, who had previously figured in a goal-less draw with Porto.

Nantes, fortified by a 2-0 away win over Cannes at the weekend, entertain Denmark's Aalborg, who were beaten 2-0 by Porto when they made their Champions' League debut three weeks ago after replacing Dynamo Kiev.

The Ukrainians were banned for allegedly trying to bribe the referee before their game against Panathinaikos.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMAR HUSSEIN
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East-West vulnerable. East deals.
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♥ 10 9 8 5
♦ 10 8 5 3
♣ J 5
WEST
♠ Q 7
♥ K 7 6 5
♦ J 8 7
♣ Q 9 5 4
EAST
♠ K J 10 5 4 3
♥ Q 7 6 5 4
♦ A 7 6 4
♣ 7 2
SOUTH
♠ A Q J 8 4 2
♥ Q
♦ A K 10 6 3

The bidding:
EAST SOUTH WEST NORTH
1♠ 2♦ 2♠ 2♠
2♥ 2♥ 3♥ 3♥
3♥ 3♥ 4♥ 4♥
4♥ 4♥ 5♥ 5♥
5♥ 5♥ 6♥ 6♥

Opening lead: Queen of ♠.
Follow the play of this hand. Was the result normal, or could either declarer or the defender have done better?
Note North's raise to four hearts. South's sequence of first doubling then cue-bidding created a game force, so North could only obey orders and hope for the best.

West led the queen of spades, taken by the ace. Declarer cashed the ace and king of clubs, then ruffed a club high. A spade ruff in the closed hand provided the entry for another club ruff. High then came a trump to the ace followed by the queen of trumps to West's king. West shifted to a diamond, taken by the king. East reverted to spades and, whether declarer ruffed high or low, West had to score another trump trick for down one.

Was South simply unlucky to encounter a 4-0 trump break? What's your verdict?
In effect, declarer set up the trump promotion for the enemy. Better timing could have avoided that trap.

After ruffing the first club high, declarer should return to hand with the ace of trumps to ruff another club. Now declarer simply leads a diamond, and all is well.

East can do no better than return a spade. Declarer ruffs low and leads a high trump to force out the king. The diamond return is ruffed low, the last trump is drawn and declarer's remaining club is the filling trick.

Declarer's diamond play, a Scares Groups to the trade, cut the enemy communications at the key moment.

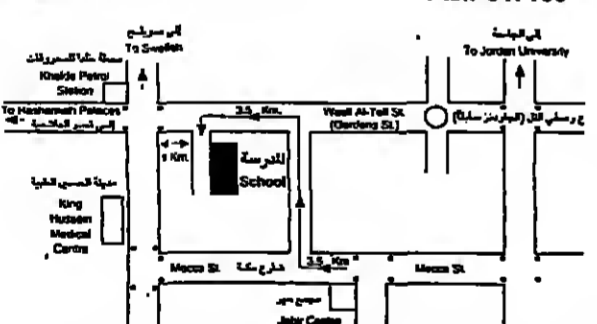
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Arnold Schwarzeneger...in
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tchies this season, should
v Helm Grashoppers
y Hungary's Ferencvaros
2-0 by Real Madrid in
ague Group D games.
They are without injured
ants, but do not expect
light injuries will deplete
over in their 1-0 win over
teal, and Finn Jan La
tunen, who hit a hat-trick
5-1 drubbing of Ferenc
varos.

Group B runners Sparta
take on Rosenborg in
terday with confidence in
ter victories over England's
Blackburn Rovers and Po
land's Legia Warsaw. In
tional striker Sergei I
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posedly assembled Blackburn.
The English champions
lew to Warsaw for leg
natch against Legia with
England winger Stuart
Reley, as the player could
with his wife who was taken
to hospital on Tuesday be
cause of a pregnancy com
plication.

In Group A, unbeaten Pa
nathinaikos in duan
nosed after crushing Brag
lat on Saturday in one of
their best performances of
the season to make it a year
since they tasted defeat in the
Portuguese league.

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weekend, entertain De
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beaten 2-0 by Porto who
they made their Champions
League debut three weeks
ago after replacing Dynamo
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The Ukrainians were ban
ned for allegedly trying to
bribe the referee before their
game against Panathinaikos.

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Germans launch fierce attack on IAAF boss

BONN (R) — German athletics chiefs on Monday launched a fierce attack on the sport's leading official Primo Nebiolo, accusing him of being undemocratic and of drawing up a "hit list" of people who criticised his views.

After Germany's former European Athletics Federation (EAA) General Secretary Heiner Henze failed to win a place on the federation's council at the weekend, the German Athletics Federation (DLV) made a rare public attack on Nebiolo.

The DLV, one of the sport's largest federations, said Henze often spoke his mind. It alleged that the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) chief used unacceptable tactics to influence an EAA vote at a meeting in Paris.

"Heiner Henze was one of the few people who gave his views openly and was capable of constructive criticism in dealings with the IAAF," a DLV statement said.

"Anyone who has criticised Nebiolo in the past is put on his hit list. That such politics can be successful should be a warning to all democrats in sporting organisations."

Nebiolo has been criticised in the past for being too powerful and dictatorial in running athletics. It is rare, however, that one of the IAAF's major federations should attack him on the record.

Appeals trial opens in French soccer disaster

BASTIA, Corsica (R) — Twelve men faced a heavily-guarded appeals court in Corsica on Monday over France's worst soccer disaster, the collapse of a stadium stand which killed 17 people and injured more than 2,300 in 1992.

Police sharpshooters watched from rooftops as the appeals trial started, with those before the court — administrative, security and soccer officials as well as construction workers — sitting behind bullet-proof glass.

The stand at Bastia's Furiani Stadium collapsed minutes before kick-off for a French semi-final game against Marseille, killing or maiming the equivalent of one per cent of the French Mediterranean island's population.

A lower court jailed six men for up to two years on charges of manslaughter and causing bodily harm last March. Two others were given suspended prison terms.

Those sentenced appealed on the grounds that the judges had unfairly made them scapegoats for the tragedy while relatives of the victims had complained that the sentences were too lenient.

In the box were four Corsican soccer officials, two French soccer league officials and a building engineer who were convicted in the lower court, as well as three administrative officials and two fire brigade officers who were acquitted.

Three of those acquitted are on trial again following appeals by the victims and the two others following appeals by the state prosecutor.

Soccer will be at a standstill during the appeal trial, expected to last two weeks. The Corsican Soccer League has cancelled all games until October 29 to protest at sentences inflicted on its officials.

Jean-Marie Boismont, the engineer responsible for building the stand, had declined to face the appeals court, saying he preferred to serve his two-year term away from the media blitz.

Prosecutors have charged that negligence, greed and favours led to the stand passing safety tests and an extra 10,000 tickets being sold.

The disaster drew comparisons with the deaths of 96 Liverpool football fans crushed at Hillsborough Stadium in England in 1989 and the 39 people killed during a 1985 riot between Liverpool and Juventus fans at Brussels' Heysel Stadium.

Schumacher keen to leave Benetton in style

BANGKOK (R) — Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher, poised to reclaim his title this week, said on Tuesday he also wanted to steer the Benetton Renault team to the Constructors' World Title before departing for Ferrari.

"I believe we are going to win the championship this year. We won it last year, and I hope I can secure the Constructors' Championship as well this year," said Schumacher, who leads the Drivers' Championship by a handsome 27 points.

The German driver, on a two-day visit to Thailand to try and promote Formula One, needs just three more points to clinch the title, while the Benetton team lead Williams by 20 points in the Constructors' table.

Schumacher, who recently signed a multi-million dollar deal with Ferrari for two seasons, said he decided to leave Benetton after nearly five years because he needs a new challenge.

"Life changes and I'm looking for a new challenge," he said. "When we've done this (the Championship), we've done everything you can... in Formula One together. That is the reason I've decided to look for a new challenge which hopefully is going to be successful."

After his visit to Thailand, Schumacher heads to Japan for the Pacific Grand Prix and the Japanese Grand Prix in successive weeks. That will be followed by the Australian Grand Prix in Adelaide on November 12, the final race of the Formula One season.



Michael Schumacher

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All eyes on the Scots

PARIS (AFP) — Scottish clubs will take centre stage in this week's European cup action, with Rangers meeting Juventus in the Champions League and Celtic facing Paris St. Germain in the Cup Winners Cup.

Both will be starting out as underdogs against some top-class continental opposition.

Juventus, runaway leaders in Group C after two straight victories, are among the favourites to lift the trophy, while Rangers are struggling in third place after one defeat and one draw.

However, the Calcio club have not had everything their own way recently.

On Sunday, they were beaten 2-1 by AC Milan and saw both members of their highly successful strike force — Gianluca Vialli and Fabrizio Ravanelli — limp off injured.

Vialli, who pulled a thigh muscle, is out for two weeks, while Ravanelli is battling against a thigh injury of his own.

"I'll see how the fitness test goes," said the grey-haired

Ravanelli. "But I'm certainly hoping I'll be able to play."

His absence would leave coach Marcello Lippi with a single all-out striker, Alessandro Del Piero, for Wednesday's match at the Stadio Delle Alpi.

However, if Lippi has worries, Rangers boss Walter Smith has nightmares.

Dane Brian Laudrup, England's Paul Gascoigne, Charlie Miller, Trevor Steven and Ian Ferguson are all expected to miss the match through injury, while central defender Alan Matarren is suspended.

Russian star Oleg Salenko is fighting to recover from a hamstring injury, but Smith could have striker Ally McCoist fit after he came on as a later substitute in Saturday's 4-0 win over Celtic Thistle.

Juventus vice-president Roberto Bettiga said: "We know it is important for both teams but we are in the best possible position."

"We have six points but we want to win because a third victory would possibly be enough for us to reach the next stage — so there is more

pressure on Rangers to do something on Wednesday."

Elsewhere in the league, bottom club Blackburn Rovers travel to Legia Warsaw in search of their first points in Group B, while holders Ajax Amsterdam look set to crush the Grasshoppers of Zurich in Group D.

The spotlight on the Cup Winners Cup will clearly be on Paris, with Thursday's visit by Celtic to the Parc des Princes.

After a comfortable 7-2 aggregate victory over Georgians Dinamo Batumi, Celtic manager Tommy Burns said: "This is the kind of level of competition we really want to be playing at."

"We are looking forward to it and it is a tremendous stage for my players. They have a lot of quality but with guys like Andreas Thom so have we."

PSG, held to a 0-0 draw at Lyon on Saturday despite their opponents losing their goalkeeper after only 20 minutes, have Brazilian playmaker Rai back on board.

Seles may play in Fed Cup match

NEW YORK (R) — U.S. Fed Cup captain Billie Jean King says she is looking forward to possibly using Monica Seles in singles and doubles in the final against Spain next month.

"I would even consider using Monica for three matches," King said Monday night

at the Women's Sports Foundation 16th annual gala for women in sports at the Waldorf-Astoria.

Seles, the co-ranked number one player in the world with Steffi Graf of Germany, was invited along with six others, including Martina Navratilova, Lindsay Davenport, Gigi Fernandez and Mary Joe Fernandez, to play in the final November 25-26 in Spain. The four players who will play will be announced Nov. 15.

The idea of using Seles to play two singles matches and one doubles match in the best-of-five match competition has been endorsed by the other players, King said.

"When we played France all the players were saying, 'can Monica play,'" said King, referring to the team's semifinal victory in July.

"So, the American women want to win. They are not like saying, 'if she plays I won't get to play.' They don't get into that and that is very helpful because as the captain I don't have to deal with the

ego thing."

"There hasn't been a question. They want her. They know with her it will make a difference."

After being sidelined for more than two years after being stabbed in the back while on the court in Hamburg on April 30, 1993, the 22-year-old Seles made a triumphant return to tournament competition in August. She won the first tournament of her comeback — the Canadian Open — without losing a set and followed by reaching the U.S. Open final where she lost to Graf.

"I think she is the one to beat still," King said of Seles, who had won eight Grand Slam singles titles before the attack.

The Yugoslav-born Seles became naturalised American citizen in 1994, and has never before represented the United States in any international team competition.

"If I get chosen to play, I would love it," said Seles, who was also at the dinner. "It would be nice to bring it back home."

Driver dies in hospital

ROME (R) — Brazilian Formula 3000 motor racing driver Marco Campos died in hospital in Paris on Tuesday after a crash at Magny Cours at the weekend, the manager of his Italian-based team said.

"He died this morning at about 1.00 a.m.," Adriano Morini, manager of the Draco Racing Team, told Reuters in a telephone interview from the German city of Mannheim. "We are totally destroyed, in despair," he said.

Campos, 19, hit the rear wheel of Italian driver Thomas Biagi on the last lap of Sunday's race, cartwheeling

several times and sustaining severe head injuries. He entered a coma and was declared clinically dead on Monday.

Motor racing sources said he was the first driver to die in Formula 3000 since the series started in 1985.

Morini, who also worked with Brazilian Formula One driver Rubens Barrichello in 1990, said he had discovered Campos and brought him to Italy. "I trained him myself," he said.

"He was special. It's hard to compare him to other drivers but he had a special talent. He was one of the best."



German tennis player Steffi Graf leaves meeting children who will be acting as ball-boys/girls at the forthcoming Brighton Tennis Tournament (Reuters)

U.S. Open to change format, move women's final

NEW YORK (R) — The U.S. Open is borrowing from "super Saturday" in hopes of creating a sensational "championship Sunday" by changing its format and moving the women's final to the last day of the championships.

The latest five-year television deal, sealed last week between the U.S. Tennis Association and CBS Sports, calls for the women's final to shift from Saturday afternoon

to Sunday afternoon, where it will precede the men's final.

In recent years, the women's final had been played in between the men's semifinals on Saturday, a marathon day for tennis fans.

The WTA tour said Monday that the women's final had a fixed starting time of 2:00 p.m. on Sunday.

The WTA tour had long

objected to the previous arrangement since the women's final had no set scheduled time and the finalists had no rest day after Friday's semifinals.

The men's finalists still have no rest day before their final, but removing the women's final from Saturday's programme means the second men's semifinal will not carry over into the night, as often has been the case.

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Al Hussein camp residents relieved after King's assurance

By Natasha Bukhari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A statement made this week by His Majesty King Hussein on the status of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan seems to have dispelled fears among the residents of the camps that a recent court ruling to evacuate property on which two refugee camps were set up might result in their evacuation.

"His Majesty King Hussein's words were received with relief by the camp's residents... we have always known the King to be supportive," said Khader

Suwan, a resident of Al Hussein refugee camp.

In a statement to the press Saturday, the King said that there was no need for worry over the issue of the ownership of lands on which Palestinian refugee camps were built.

"I am not Qadhafi nor is Jordan Libya," the King said, referring to the plight of Palestinians being expelled from Libya.

The government also assured the refugees that they would not be evacuated.

Minister of Justice Hisham Tal told the Jordan Times in an earlier interview that the government

would not evict the tens of thousands of residents of Al Hussein refugee camp despite a court ruling. Saying that there was "no reason to be concerned," Mr. Tal affirmed that the government either buy or lease the land from the owners.

Al Hussein camp accommodates over 80,000 Palestinians who fled their homes in Palestine in the 1948.

The King's statement was also welcomed by the charge d'affaires of the Palestinian embassy, Omar Khatib, who thanked the King for ending the controversy over the Palesti-

nian refugee camps.

"Wisdom is a source of reassurance and satisfaction for the Palestinian people living in the camps, who are treated on equal footing with the Jordanian citizens in terms of rights and duties," said Mr. Khatib in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

But to many of the camp's residents, the problem has not been yet solved especially that no government action has been so far taken, and lands owners are threatening to sue the government if the court ruling was not implemented sooner.

"What has been said about the issue is reassuring, but we are waiting for tangible moves that would eliminate our worries once and for all," said one resident who asked not to be named.

"We still have not been informed about what the government actually plans to do," said another resident.

The camp's residents are also worried that the government might decide to leave the land to them because they say they might not be able to afford rent.

"The camp's residents are mostly people with very low income and their situation is very difficult; they

cannot afford to lease any property or pay rent," Mr. Suwan said.

"If my income is 100 dinars a month and I have worked all my expenses around that, how could I afford to pay rent... that would mean that I would have to give up something very essential in order to pay rent..." he said.

"There is no way that I can afford paying for anything extra... I can hardly make do with what little I earn as it is," Abu Ahmad, a father of four, said.

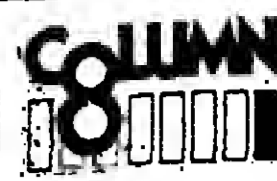
The issue, which officials insist is judicial not political, has, however, reignited the controversy over the

fate of Palestinian refugees, one of the thorniest issues in Arab-Israeli conflict.

Under the terms of the September 1993 declaration of principles signed by Israel and the Palestinians, the two would only discuss the issue in the final stage of negotiations in 1996.

But as far as Al Hussein refugee camp residents are concerned, resolving their immediate problem is the most important issue at hand.

"Every incident has a time for discussion... what we want now is for this problem to be solved," Mr. Suwan said.



Toddler plunges off 25-metre cliff, survives

LEUCADIA, California (AP) — An 18-month-old boy has survived an 80-foot (25-metre) fall over a cliff with not a broken bone. Grant Taylor-Huff landed in the surf at high tide Sunday and was being tossed around when a couple strolling by noticed him and plucked him from the water. "If it wouldn't have been for them, there's no doubt in my mind that the kid probably would have drowned," said Sheriff's Deputy Robert Brunk. Grant was hospitalized in fair condition Monday. He and his mother, Joanne Taylor, 31, of Costa Mesa, were visiting his grandmother in Leucadia, about 40 kilometres north of downtown San Diego. Taylor-Huff was playing with his 6-year-old cousin when he crawled over a fence into some brush and plunged off the cliff. Jim and Maria Lindsay were walking their two dogs on the beach and saw the tumbling figure about 100 metres away. "The water washed away and we saw a little form moving," said Maria Lindsay. "We started running as hard as we could toward it and to our horror, it was a baby."

People of Mideast ready for peace, Pelletreau says

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs, on Tuesday attacked what he termed as rejectionist forces trying to undermine the Arab-Israeli peace process and said developments in the region sent a message to Syria that people were ready for peace.

"There is a message for Syria. I don't know how the Syrians will read it. But the message is that the people in the Middle East are ready for peace," Mr. Pelletreau said in a Worldnet press conference. "There is no comprehensive peace without Syria and Lebanon."

Mr. Pelletreau attacked Lebanon's Hizbollah as a rejectionist group promoting violence to undermine the peace process.

He said that Israel and Syria affirmed their interest in reaching a peace agreement.

"Negotiations are moving more slowly recently... (but) there isn't going to be a gradual agreement between Israel and Syria. Peace will be comprehensive," he said. "It will have all four legs of the table."

Mr. Pelletreau said he did not expect Israel and Syria to reach a peace accord quickly but stressed that efforts were under way for an agreement.

On Jerusalem, Mr. Pelletreau said, the issue should be left to the last phase of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

"The (Clinton) administration opposes the proposed legislation to move the embassy" to Jerusalem, he said. "We indicated that this is not the right time. (The concerned) parties agreed to put it off until the last stage and we respect that agreement."

When pressed, he said: "I advise not to leap into conclusions. Let's see what finally comes out. We're interested in facilitating peace

agreements and we are not interested in undermining our role as honest brokers."

He said that American officials preferred to meet with Palestinians in the areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority and not the Orient House in Arab East Jerusalem until the status of the city was settled.

"Jerusalem is a very sensitive issue, but we're still in the interim period," he said. The U.S. prefers to hold "meetings with the Palestinian Authority where they are exercising jurisdiction and where they have their offices."

Asked on the status of Iraq in the post-peace era, Mr. Pelletreau said that the U.S. "always felt that unity of Iraq should be preserved. It is living in an unusual situation because it does not comply with U.N. resolutions... We hope it will find a way to become a member of the region and part of the broader peace."



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Abdul Hafez Mirai, during a visit he paid on Tuesday to the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces (Armed Forces photo)

Jordan honours its servicemen who served with U.N. in Croatia

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Tuesday attended a ceremony organised by the Armed Forces headquarters to honour Jordanian soldiers, officers and non-commissioned officers who were killed or wounded in the fighting in former Yugoslavia while performing their peacekeeping mission as part of the U.N. peace

keeping forces in Croatia.

Addressing the ceremony attended by the servicemen's families, Prince Hassan praised the important role the Jordanian peacekeepers played in Croatia, and voiced His Majesty King Hussein's and his own pride in the performance of the Jordanian Armed Forces. He said the U.N. itself would honour the Jordanian

peacekeepers soon.

Earlier Tuesday, Prince Hassan visited the Armed Forces headquarters where he met for a while with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Abdul Hafez Mirai, and discussed with him issues of common interest to the Armed Forces. The Crown Prince also paid a field visit to the 12th Royal Mechanised Division.

Rabbani suffers new setback

KABUL (Agencies) — Already beleaguered by a rebel attack on the capital Kabul, government forces were overrun by a different opposition faction in the central town of Bamiyan, a government spokesman said Tuesday.

The fall of Bamiyan, about 120 kilometres west of Kabul, reduces the government's already faltering hold on the country.

"Bamiyan fell to the opposition Hezb-e-Wahadat on Monday night," said a government spokesman known only as General Muslim.

The Hezb-e-Wahadat, a small Shiite Muslim group, has battled with government forces for control of regions west of Kabul.

"We still control the surrounding territory and it will be very difficult for them to resupply their forces."

Government soldiers captured Bamiyan from the Hezb-e-Wahadat in June after a fierce battle. But Monday's reversal in Bamiyan comes in the wake of a series of government defeats at the hands of various opposition factions.

Last week, militia fighters from the Taliban faction marched to within five kilometres south and west of Kabul.

In the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad and in Pakistan's frontier capital Peshawar, opposition commanders and political representatives met Tuesday to discuss forming a united front against Afghan

President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Officials representing the Taliban, former communist Dostum Rashid's faction and the Hezb-e-Islami led by former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar met in Peshawar.

The representatives hope to forge a united alliance to topple Mr. Rabbani government and install a coalition administration, a spokesman for the Taliban told the Associated Press.

A united front would put even greater pressure on Mr. Rabbani's forces which now control about a quarter of the country, according to a government estimate.

In August the Taliban toppled the key western city of Herat — the government's last stronghold in western Afghanistan.

The string of losses has limited the government access to supplies for the capital.

Roads into and out of Kabul have been squeezed by rebel factions, restricting the number of supply trucks that can enter the city.

Fuel prices in Kabul have shot up over the last two months.

Formerly allied factions toppled the communist government in Kabul in 1992, but since have splintered and turned their guns on one another in a bitter civil war.

More than 25,000 people — mostly civilians — have died in Kabul's factional fighting.

Wounded reporter evacuated

Agence France-Presse correspondent Terence White, seriously wounded by mortar shrapnel while covering the civil war in Afghanistan, was transferred to a Paris hospital on Tuesday, AFP announced.

Mr. White arrived at Le Bourget Airport in a medical plane chartered by Europe Assistance, and was immediately taken to a hospital in the French capital.

The New Zealand native, 46, was injured on the outskirts of Kabul on Oct. 13 when the Afghan government soldier he was photographing caused a mortar cannon to explode accidentally.

Also wounded in the blast, though less severely, was AFP translator Mohammad Bashir.

"I heard the explosion," Mr. White recalled, "and when I came to I realized that I was bleeding heavily." Mr. White received surgery for abdominal wounds in Kabul, and is out of danger. "I feel better now," Mr. White added.

Mr. Bashir, an Afghan national, is also due to be evacuated from Kabul in a few days. He is waiting for a visa.

Mr. White joined the AFP bureau in Kabul in 1992. A specialist on the region, he made several reporting trips into Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation of the 1980s.

Court rejects case of lawyer/politician against JBA ban after his visit to Israel

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Higher Court of Justice on Tuesday dismissed a case filed by lawyer and Liberal Party leader Mohammad Zoubi against a ban imposed on him by the Jordan Bar Association (JBA) after he visited Israel in June.

Khader Irsheidat, Mr. Zoubi's lawyer, said the court ruled that the issue was beyond its jurisdiction and decided to dismiss the case.

The JBA executive council, which opposes normalisation of relations with Israel, imposed the ban against Mr. Zoubi practising his profession after the lawyer, in his capacity as leader of the Liberal Party, paid a visit to Israel, where he met with President Ezer Weizman and Israeli politicians.

The council imposed the ban pending the results of an internal JBA investigation to ascertain whether Mr. Zoubi violated a standing council order — adopted in August 1994 — to its members against all forms of contacts with Israel.

Mr. Irsheidat expressed

disappointment that the court decided to throw out the case and said his client had now to wait until a final decision is adopted by the JBA council.

He said the court ruling was based on the finding that the council had against Mr. Zoubi was not final and subject to the result of the internal JBA investigation.

A JBA council member who did not want to be identified said the council, which is expected to discuss the issue "soon," could impose "a permanent ban" on Mr. Zoubi or "merely suspend his membership."

Mr. Zoubi argued that he paid the visit in response to an Israeli invitation to his party and as such it had no relevance to his professional status or his membership in the JBA, whose approval is necessary for any lawyer to practise his or her profession in the country.

Mr. Irsheidat said. In any event, Mr. Irsheidat noted in an interview with the Jordan Times, Mr. Zoubi's visit came after Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty on Oct. 26, 1994, and as such there was no violation of any rule or regulation.

There are several other professional associations which, like the JBA, reject normalisation of relations with Israel and ruled out any contacts with Israelis. Some of them have adopted "disciplinary measures" against those who violated their orders against contacts with Israelis.

His Majesty King Hussein recently described those who oppose peace with Israel as "those who live in the past" and said a panel was looking into legislation that stipulate that membership in and approval of professional associations was a prerequisite for anyone to practice his or her profession in the country.

The King has also said that the mandate of the professional associations was to improve the standard of the concerned professions and to address issues that directly concern its members rather than indulging in political affairs.

Mr. Zoubi told the Jordan Times on Tuesday: "The Jordan Bar Association is supposed to fight for and defend my rights as a lawyer. I am surprised that it is standing against me."

Hamas may end threat of violence

GAZA CITY (AFP) — A Hamas leader said Tuesday for the first time that the hardline group could end its attacks on Israelis to reach a reconciliation deal with the Palestinian Authority.

"Hamas may stop its attacks on Israel if that is in the interests of the Palestinian people," Sheikh Ahmad Bahr told AFP.

On Monday he was released from a Palestinian jail in Gaza on the orders of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat after serving nearly four months.

It was the first time that a leading Hamas member evoked a possible end to the attacks, a key condition set by Mr. Arafat for any reconciliation.

"Any accord with Hamas which does not set out an end to the attacks on Israel would be nonsense. Without this clause no accord can be valid," the head of the Palestinian security services Nasser Yusef said.

"My release is a very important gesture for the unity of the Palestinian people," Sheikh Bahr told journalists on Monday.

"The chances of reaching an agreement between Hamas and the Palestinian (National) Authority (PNA) are greater than ever and I hope this agreement will be reached soon... before the redeployment of the Israeli army in the West Bank."

But Inad Faluji, the director of the Hamas mouthpiece Al Watan, was more cautious saying negotiations were still going on between the two sides.

"It is a very complicated matter because there are the attacks in Israel, those conducted in the Palestinian territories or from the territories, without forgetting those carried out abroad."

"These different points must be considered," he said. But he agreed that Mr. Arafat's self-rule authority had shown "good faith" and Hamas has softened its tone towards the PLO. The current climate could augur well for an accord between the two sides.

Hamas, which is opposed to the autonomy accords signed with Israel and has killed dozens of Israelis in bombings over the last two years, has so far refused to lift its threat of further attacks.

But amid growing signs of rapprochement, Mr. Arafat on Friday met 12 Hamas leaders in the West Bank for the first time. He has freed two Hamas leaders so far this month and lifted a ban on Al Watan.

The PLO leader also won permission from Israel for four Hamas members to travel to Sudan to sound out the group's leadership in exile about an eventual reconciliation.

Palestinian human rights activists said they were concerned about three recent cases in which Palestinian prisoners were beaten to death by fellow Arab inmates in Israeli prisons.

"Torture is a war crime, and the perpetrators of such a crime should be pursued in all circumstances," said a joint statement by two human rights groups, the Mandela Institute and Al Haq.

An investigation showed that the three victims, sentenced for membership in Hamas, were beaten to death by Palestinian inmates on suspicion they were informers for Israel, the statement said.

The death of at least one of the prisoners sparked violent protest at week.

U.K. TV icon Bet bids soap goodbye

LONDON (R) — Brassy pub landlady Bet Gilroy, a national icon beloved by Queen Elizabeth and at least two British prime ministers, has said goodbye to the soap opera "Coronation Street" after 25 years. With her plunging cleavage, peroxide hair and fake leopardskin outfits, actress Julie Goodyear, 52, created one of the most enduring characters on British television in the working-class drama watched by 250 million people worldwide. Goodyear, herself appropriately enough the daughter of a publican, pulled her last pint of beer as landlady in the Rover's Return, the most famous fictional pub in Britain.

Queen joins Thatcher to celebrate birthday

LONDON (R) — Britain's Queen Elizabeth attended a glittering gala dinner to mark the 70th birthday of Margaret Thatcher, the longest-serving prime minister of her reign. There has been media speculation that the queen and her former prime minister did not get on, but Thatcher greeted the monarch warmly. Guests at the dinner ranged from film star Michael Caine and best-selling novelist Frederick Forsyth to Thatcher's past drivers and detectives during her 11 years as prime minister. She was ousted from the Conservative Party leadership in 1990.

Milan's La Scala hit by strike, again

MILAN (R) — Musicians at Milan's La Scala opera house called a strike for Oct. 20, hitting the opening night of Donizetti's Lucia Di Lammermoor, unions said. The decision was taken after talks between Italy's three big union confederations and La Scala managers. The theatre workers want more money, hiring of more staff and a new national contract. The world-famous opera house, which opens its main season with Mozart's The Magic Flute on Dec. 7, has already been hit twice by industrial action in recent months.

Bosnian advances reveal more Serb atrocities

KAMENGRAD, Bosnia (R) — Bosnian Muslims and Croats liberated by the defeat of Serbs in northwest Bosnia accuse Serb soldiers of carrying out beatings and killings during a wave of ethnic cleansing.

Bosnian officials said over 100 bodies were found in the Sanski Most area, recaptured from the Serbs last week. In the village of Kamenograd a few kilometres northwest of Sanski Most, Aziz Calic, 25, recounted how he survived a Serb execution of Muslim civilians nearby.

Mr. Calic, a Kamenograd resident, was among a dozen Muslim civilians gunned down in a ceramics factory

near his house last Wednesday before the Serbs fled the advancing Muslim army.

"The Serbs put 367 men from several Muslim villages into the Kamenograd factory about a month ago. Rumour had it then that the town would soon be captured by the government," Mr. Calic said.

"We didn't do any work. They kept us there for 20 days. They would often take us outside and beat us up with iron bars and rifle butts, just for fun."

Before daybreak last Wednesday, as government troops were closing on the town, a group of Serb soldiers took a dozen prisoners

outside. This time they did not beat them.

"Only one guy stayed with us. He came really close and opened fire from his automatic rifle. People fell down around me," Mr. Calic said.

"The soldier kept firing, a few bullets grazed me on the hip and I collapsed too. All my comrades were down, dead or dying," he said.

"I lay still, playing dead. When he left I got up and limped away into the woods. The same afternoon our units captured the town."

Sanski Most Mayor Mirzet Karabeh, said Serb troops may have killed as many as 300 non-Serb men in the area in the past month, since the

Muslim government troops and their Croat allies went on the offensive in the northwest.

Reuters reporters were shown 37 bodies in three different locations. The dead were all said to be Muslims and Croats.

On Monday the reporters saw 11 bodies of men shot at point blank range, obviously recently, in the ceramics factory warehouse from which Mr. Calic had escaped.

Serb-held northwest Bosnia became notorious from 1992 onwards for expulsions, prison camps and mass killings which were part of a gigantic "ethnic cleansing" campaign.

Some 3,500 Muslims lived in Sanski Most for three years under Serb rule. Mr. Karabeh said. Only 500 men were found when the government troops marched in last week.

The Serbs took another 700 men with them while retreating northwards, and some 2,000 women and children were expelled to central Bosnia. That left 300 unaccounted for, he said.

Reporters saw another 15 corpses in the Serb village of Lukici, north of Sanski Most, on Monday.

A local Croat, who spent the war in Sanski Most with a small work unit made up of Croat and Muslim men, said

Serbs had treated them fairly well until a month ago, when they placed hundreds of men in a cement factory.

Shortly before that eight of his fellow workers, Croats, failed to report for duty one morning. "I was told they were intercepted and taken away by Arkan's men," he said, referring to a notorious Serb paramilitary commander.

But some, at least, were not. "I can recognise four of my men, all Croats," the man, who would not give his name, said after lifting the blankets and looking at the green worm-eaten remnants. Some were decomposed beyond recognition.